

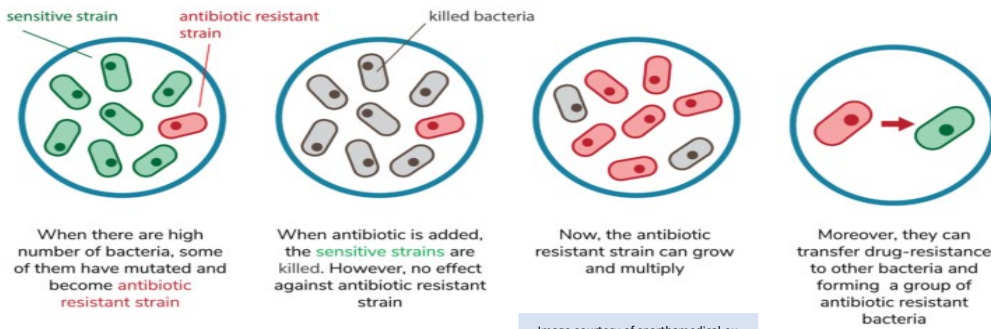
Antimicrobial Awareness and Antibiotic use

Antimicrobial resistance is a major concern. The reason for this is it does not only have a long term effect on our animals health but potentially on our own too.

The use of antibiotics historically was to act proactively, providing cover incase an infection were to arise, however information from the World Health Organisation (WHO) indicates that this is having a detrimental effect on the efficacy of antibiotics, as microbes are becoming stronger and resistant, making them more complicated to treat.

Drug resistant bacteria

How does it happen?



Another issue this can cause is the killing off of 'good' bacteria our bodies, which we rely on to maintain a healthy system. This is especially prevalent in the gut and aids normal digestion, if this bacteria is removed it will have an effect on other areas of the body, causing secondary issues, such as diarrhoea.

If your vet suspects that your pet may have an infection, they will recommend checking a sample of the area for signs of bacteria, fungi or parasites, this could be a swab of the ear, sample of urine/faeces or scraping of skin. In some cases, the vet will be able to assess this sample in the practice and follow the cascade (recommended medication list) to determine what treatment to provide. If they would like a second opinion or further analysis they will request the sample is sent to an external lab for further testing. This will provide additional information, ensuring your pet is offered the best solution available for their issue by narrowing down which antibiotic will likely be effective.

It is important that even if your pet has had a similar presenting infection before, for the vet to check that it is in fact being caused by the same bacteria etc. This means that an antibiotic previously recommended may not be effective every time. Please check with your vet before giving any medications and always complete any course of antibiotics given, even if your pet seems well again.

With regards to surgery, modern practice aims to prevent the occurrence of an infection by following strict protocols to reduce the risk of contracting an infection. This can be achieved by observing:

- High standards of cleanliness, deeply cleaning the operating theatre daily, refreshing between patients.
- Restricting the proximity of outside influences such as changing shoes & clothing worn outside theatre for theatre specific clothing. Same with bedding and blankets.
- Equipment and materials are sterilized prior to use.
- Ensuring bedding and blankets are used only for one patient and are swiftly changed if they become soiled.
- Preparing surgical areas using recognized techniques and cleaning methods.

If there is no breach of sterility and the procedure is not overlong, it is likely your pet will be sent home without antibiotics after routine surgery. If your animal has had a long, complex surgery or there is the possibility of contamination outside of our control, then there is a possibility antibiotics be prescribed at your vets discretion.



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