



LHI Retirement Services is celebrating World Antimicrobial Awareness Week 18th-24th November 2021 and supporting residents and clients to live a healthy life.

‘Spread Awareness, Stop Resistance’.

Why World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW)?

WAAW aims to increase awareness of global antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and to encourage best practices to avoid further emergence and spread of drug-resistant infections or germs.

The theme this year is:

‘Spread Awareness, Stop Resistance’

with the overarching WAAW slogan continuing to be **‘Antimicrobials: Handle with Care’**.



With the theme **‘Spread awareness, stop resistance’**, we want people to see, hear, and relate to AMR as a health threat affecting our environment, animals, families, and communities today.

The emergence of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) means some infections may once again become life threatening and infection with bacteria resistant to antibiotics may increasingly complicate or compromise some diseases.

Previously, activities and programs such as Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) largely focused on the hospital sector where they have been shown to decrease inappropriate antimicrobial usage, decrease the incidence of antimicrobial resistance, improve patient outcomes and reduce preventable adverse consequences of antimicrobial use.

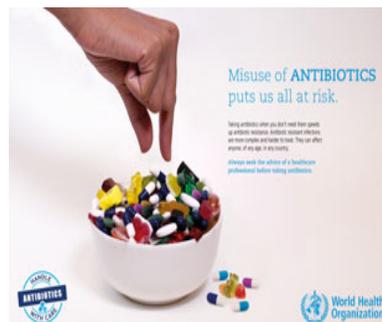
The objective of AMS in aged care is to implement programs to reduce antimicrobial resistance and ensure antimicrobials are prescribed responsibly and appropriately within the residential aged care setting.

Antimicrobial resistance is an urgent global health priority, with the World Health Organization (WHO) describing it as a looming crisis and the development of practices and procedures to reduce the risk of resistance an important priority and therefore the development of Antimicrobial Stewardship an important and integral part of saving lives.

Antibiotic resistance is an increasing problem in aged care

Older persons in aged care may have an increased susceptibility to infections due to frailty, reduced functional and nutritional status, multiple co-morbidities and compromised immune function.

Between half to three-quarters of older persons in long term care receive at least one course of antibiotics each year. The spread of bacteria between residents can be increased by living in close proximity, consumer-nurse/carer contact and consumer-consumer contact, as well as transfers from residential aged care homes to hospital and back again. There can be cross-transmission of resistant bacteria from person to person irrespective of the individual's exposure to an antibiotic.



What is being done to curb antibiotic resistance in Australia in aged care?

The Australian Department of Health has previously released the National Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy which includes many strategies across all sectors including aged care and not only in humans but also in agriculture. The Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care is developing and implementing national surveillance of AMR. This includes establishing surveillance systems in all health settings, including aged care homes, to better understand the usage of antibiotics and emerging AMR trends that could impact on public health.

What is LHI Retirement Services doing?

As part of surveying the use of antimicrobials (including antibiotics) LHI Retirement Services has taken part in the Aged Care National Antimicrobial Prescribing Survey (AcNAPS) for residential care homes for the last 5 years, recently in October 2021, and has reduced the amount of antimicrobials prescribed and used.

We are also undertaking various internal audits to gather information on antimicrobial use and using that information to ensure the practice of prescribing antimicrobials is appropriate and reasonable based upon individual needs.

Also to prevent the spread of resistant bacteria and germs, LHI audits and educates its staff in the 5 moments of hand hygiene as well as practicing correct infection prevention and control techniques.

SPREAD AWARENESS STOP RESISTANCE

Over the week in November LHI Retirement Services will be posting information and undertaking various activities with staff and residents to support this important campaign.

One way of supporting WAAW this year is to 'GO BLUE' by dressing up in blue, dying your hair blue on the 24th November to show your support in stopping the spread and by practicing good hand hygiene at all times .

WHY undertake hand hygiene /washing?

- *Hands are the Super Highway* for germs to get from one place to another.
- Older people are at higher risk of dying from an infection acquired whilst receiving care.

WHO should be undertaking hand hygiene?

- Everyone!

HOW should you wash your hands?

- Clean your hands by rubbing them with an alcohol-based formulation, if hands are not visibly soiled.



- Wash your hands with soap and water when hands are visibly dirty and after using the toilet.

“Clean hands save lives”

For further information please contact Barry Lowe Infection Control Coordinator LHI Retirement Services

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