



Media Release

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Resistance to antibiotics is a looming health crisis, says College of Public Health Medicine

New Zealanders face a looming health crisis, because some relatively common infections are developing resistance to the medicines that are usually used to treat them.

The NZ College of Public Health Medicine (NZCPHM) is raising its concerns about the responsible use of antibiotics to mark World Antibiotic Awareness Week, an annual World Health Organization event (November 13-19).

College spokesperson Professor Michael Baker says resistance to antibiotics and other antimicrobial medicines is a major public health issue that could cause 10 million deaths globally each year by 2050 if allowed to continue unchecked.¹

It is known as antimicrobial resistance (AMR), a state in which micro-organisms including bacteria, fungi, viruses and parasites no longer respond to treatment by antimicrobial medicines, such as antibiotics, antifungals, antivirals and antimalarials.

“This means standard treatments for a variety of relatively common infections are becoming ineffective. The medicines no longer work, infections persist and people remain sick, increasing the risk of dying and spread to others.

“AMR has been described as a leading global health issue that “threatens the very core of modern medicine”. It’s very important that events like World Antibiotic Awareness Week draw attention to this issue.”

Professor Baker says it is essential that New Zealand implements the New Zealand Antimicrobial Resistance Action Plan that was published earlier this year.

“This is a global issue in which New Zealand absolutely has to play its part. We need widespread commitment and leadership from medical, veterinary and agricultural sectors in New Zealand, working together.”

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Available to comment: Professor Michael Baker, NZ College of Public Health Medicine.

The NZ College of Public Health Medicine has published a policy statement on Antimicrobial Stewardship and Infection Control: Limiting the burden of antimicrobial resistance in New Zealand.

The College’s policy statement is available

at: http://www.nzcpm.org.nz/media/97734/2016_08_24_nzcpm_antimicrobial_resistance_policy_statement.pdf.

¹ New Zealand College of Public Health Medicine. NZCPHM Policy Statement on Antimicrobial stewardship and infection control: limiting the burden of antimicrobial resistance. Wellington: NZCPHM, 2016.
http://www.nzcpm.org.nz/media/97734/2016_08_24_nzcpm_antimicrobial_resistance_policy_statement.pdf