



World Antimicrobial Awareness Week

18-24 November 2021

Campaign guidance

[#WAAW](#) [#AMR](#) [#AntimicrobialResistance](#) [#HandleWithCare](#)

1. Background

Celebrated between 18-24 November each year, the World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) aims to increase awareness of global antimicrobial resistance (AMR) and to encourage best practices among the general public, health workers, farmers, animal health professionals and policy makers to avoid the further emergence and spread of drug-resistant infections.

In May 2015, a global action plan to tackle AMR was endorsed at the World Health Assembly, supported by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE). The first objective of the plan is to 'improve awareness and understanding of antimicrobial resistance through effective communication, education and training'.

To help achieve this objective, FAO, OIE, and the World Health Organization (WHO) (collectively known as the Tripartite) have jointly supported WAAW since 2015, together with the general public, students, policy makers, and professionals from various sectors around the world. This guidance is designed to provide you with the essential information you need to participate in the campaign. We hope that it will help inspire you to develop your own local activities. Your support is essential to making this campaign a success!

WAAW Campaign Objectives

- To make AMR a globally recognized issue with engagement of all sectors - human, animal, plant and environment, a 'One Health approach'.
- To raise awareness of the need to protect antimicrobial efficacy through prudent and responsible use.
- To increase recognition of the roles that individuals, governments, civil society organizations and human, animal, environment and plant health as well as agriculture professionals must all play in tackling antimicrobial resistance.
- To encourage behaviour change towards prudent use of antimicrobials across all relevant sectors and convey the message that simple actions can make a big difference.

2. Why address AMR with 'One Health approach'?

The causes and impacts of AMR cross human, animal and environmental health. Therefore, addressing AMR requires a holistic and multi-sectoral approach – referred to as a One Health approach. This approach is a collaborative, multi-sectoral, and trans-disciplinary approach recognizing the interconnections between people, animals, plants and their shared environment.

Solutions implemented through the One Health approach gather diverse specialties to work together. By designing and implementing multi-sectoral programmes, policies, legislation and research with individuals from human, terrestrial and aquatic animal and plant health, food and feed production, and the environment, AMR can be effectively addressed and broadly communicated to achieve better One Health outcomes.

3. 2021 Theme – 'Spread Awareness, Stop Resistance'

The theme for WAAW 2021¹ is: **Spread awareness, stop resistance**. As in previous years, the overall slogan for antimicrobial resistance awareness and WAAW is: **Antimicrobials: Handle with care**.

With the theme **Spread awareness, stop resistance**, we want to encourage stakeholders in human, animal, and environmental health like you to be AMR Awareness champions in their families, communities, and places of work. We want you to engage with the global campaign activities and organize events that increase knowledge about what AMR is and spread awareness on household, workplace, community, and/or governmental action that can affect the control or spread of AMR.

We also hope you will share your stories so we can shift thinking of AMR beyond being only about 'drugs and bugs'. Instead, people everywhere need to see, hear, and relate to AMR as a health threat affecting our environment, animals, families, and communities *today*.

¹ 140 stakeholders from animal, environment, and human health sectors submitted their suggestions for a global theme. The final theme was selected from among these suggestions by AMR focal points from the Tripartite Organisations' headquarters and regional offices.

4. Social media presence

WAAW has a strong social media presence on platforms including Twitter, Facebook, TikTok, and Instagram, which provides an opportunity to create global dialogue and encourage engagement.

Countries, regions, organizations, and individuals celebrating WAAW are encouraged to join the discussions on AMR through their respective social media channels. The use of global hashtags will increase the outreach and amplify voices advocating for the appropriate use of antimicrobials.

Hashtags: #WAAW #AntimicrobialResistance #AMR #HandleWithCare

Follow the WAAW conversation of the Tripartite Organizations by connecting with our accounts:

FAO:

- Facebook: www.facebook.com/UNFAO/
- Twitter: twitter.com/FAOLivestock
- Instagram: www.instagram.com/fao
- LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/company/fao
- TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@fao>

OIE

- Facebook: facebook.com/worldanimalhealth
- Twitter: twitter.com/OIEAnimalHealth
- Instagram: instagram.com/worldanimalhealth/
- LinkedIn: linkedin.com/company/world-organisation-for-animal-health/

WHO

- Facebook: www.facebook.com/WHO/
- Twitter: twitter.com/who
- Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/who/?hl=en>
- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/company/world-health-organization/>
- TikTok: <https://www.tiktok.com/@who?>

5. Why will you 'Go Blue'? Launch of WAAW global colour campaign

Despite being a leading global public health threat, many policymakers, professionals, and the general public often remain largely unaware of AMR. In an effort to improve global visibility of this health priority, individuals, communities, and organizations are invited to join a colour campaign to build awareness of AMR and the medicines we must collectively preserve.



Drawing from the *Antimicrobials: Handle with Care* slogan and also acknowledging the collective global action across sectors required to address AMR, the colour **light blue**² has been selected for the campaign.

² HEX #00b7e2, CMYK 100%, 19%, 0%, 11%, RGB 0, 183, 226, HSV 191, 100%, 89%, HSL 191, 100%, 44%

We hope that campaign participants, buildings, or landmarks will 'Go Blue' so these collective actions, combined with relevant WAAW advocacy messaging, will raise awareness about antimicrobial resistance today. Joining the campaign can serve as an individual or joint commitment to be stewards of responsible antimicrobial use.

How do you get involved?

- 'Go Blue' as an individual:
 - Wear blue during WAAW events;
 - Adjust your social media profiles with WAAW campaign digital resources;
 - Tell your family, peers, colleagues, and communities why you 'Go Blue' during WAAW. 'I'm going blue in honour of my uncle, who contracted a drug-resistant infection following hip surgery.'; OR 'I'm going blue to demonstrate my commitment as a doctor to responsible antimicrobial prescribing'
- 'Go Blue' as a workplace:
 - One Health stakeholder facilities (human and animal hospitals, clinics, laboratory facilities, pharmaceutical companies, universities) are encouraged to light up blue throughout the week and share their reasons for 'going blue' as an institution.
 - Section 6 has specific ideas for how workplaces can engage with the campaign.
- 'Go Blue' as a community:
 - On 24 November, the final day of WAAW, we encourage local landmarks and other buildings (including workplaces, water towers, sanitation facilities, etc.) to light up in light blue to raise AMR awareness and demonstrate commitment to being stewards of responsible antimicrobial use across sectors.³
 - Use the opportunity to publicly highlight your community's (or country's) commitment to addressing AMR in all sectors, in traditional or social media.

We invite everyone to drive AMR awareness-raising ahead by bringing blue to their online presence, physical communities, workplaces, governments, and cities throughout the WAAW week. On 24 November, the final day of WAAW, the Tripartite organizations will encourage monuments and buildings around the world to light up blue to spark a global conversation around AMR. Join us – go blue, spread the word, and be part of the movement!

³ Communities who desire to light their landmarks on a different day during the campaign are encouraged to do so, and can re-post pictures of the light-up event on November 24th.

6. Ideas to engage with WAAW

As students, professionals, policymakers, and members of our communities, we all have a role in sharing information about AMR and steps we can take together to prevent it.

If you are organizing an activity, virtual or in-person, let us know!

Event ideas include:

- **Share your AMR stories:** Organise a lunch or after-work get-together for colleagues to share their first, most recent, or most frightening experience with AMR. Invite your facility management (hospital administrators, shift coordinators, facility owner, etc.). On their way out, participants could sign a petition to their management, staff representative, or professional administrator supporting responsible AMR use in their workplace.
- **Celebrate your community's antimicrobial heroes:** We need professionals everywhere to protect antimicrobials from misuse and overuse. If there's an antimicrobial guardian within your school, animal feed store, veterinary hospital, health facility, sanitation system, or neighbourhood, let them know that their promotion of a healthy environment and responsible antimicrobial use is appreciated and that you count on them to continue their excellent work!
- **Go Blue for AMR Awareness:** Join the colour campaign and encourage your workplace and community to do the same. Gather those participating in the colour campaign for a #AMR photo shoot, then post across all your social media channels telling everyone why you are 'Going Blue for AMR'. See which message gets the most comments, questions, or 'Likes'!
- **Target the top:** Write to your local Member of Parliament or other elected official, share your concern about the threat of AMR. Got them interested? Ask them to speak with you and your colleagues about your country's AMR National Action Plan. Brainstorm "what would it take?" and find a few critical steps to take in the next year to make progress towards national targets.
- **Make it fun!** Develop an antimicrobial trivia game, case study quiz, or treasure hunt for local students. Launch a multi-generational tic-tac-toe challenge to your community and online followers to complete by the end of WAAW. Players could complete any three out of nine suggested local activities that contribute to stopping antimicrobial resistance. Some examples include: throw out your expired medicines, eat antibiotic-free foods for a day, join a WAAW event, vaccinate your pets, teach someone about AMR, thank an AMR champion, share a story about AMR in your community, post on social media why you are "Going Blue" with #WAAW.
- **Learn global, act local:** Grab some snacks (after washing hands, of course), watch a WAAW webinar together, and discuss how the presentations fit your local context.
- **Pass it on:** Set up a workplace message chain to pass on three key facts about AMR to everyone over the week. This can be done by phone, WhatsApp, social media messaging or other means, but the message has to get passed along.
- **Nurture young AMR Champions:** Work with your local school administration to convene a special school assembly about AMR. Teach children basics about infection prevention, safe and responsible medicine use, the importance of proper diagnosis and following medical advice.

7. Advocacy and communications materials

The Tripartite Organizations are happy to share their AMR- and WAAW-related advocacy and communications materials for use and distribution.

These include:

- The 'Antimicrobials: Handle with Care' stamp [Annex 1]
- Key dates during WAAW 2021 [Annex 2]
- Infographics, social media tiles, and other media [Annex 3]
- What is 'antimicrobial resistance'? [Annex 4]

Annex 1 – Handle with Care stamp

The overarching WAAW slogan/handle continues to be 'Antimicrobials: Handle with Care'. The stamps are the unifying visual identity for the global campaign and are freely available at <https://who.canto.global/b/PJFCO> for your WAAW materials and events.

Visual reminders that antimicrobials should be handled with care are a great way to start conversations and raise awareness about current AMR challenges. You can print the stamp on face masks, t-shirts, the white coats, vests or other uniforms worn by health care, patient service, and sanitation professionals in your facility or badge lanyards. Replace pens or other sponsored or commercial advertising items in your facility with ones printed with the 'Antimicrobials: Handle with Care' slogan.

Once you're finished, share your creativity by posting on social media using #WAAW.

Annex 2 – Connections to other campaigns

WAAW runs 18-24 November. There are additional related regional and international awareness days during this period, which may be useful to consider when developing your own campaign. This non-exhaustive list includes:

- 18 November – European Antibiotic Awareness Day
- 19 November – World Toilet Day (awareness day for safely managed sanitation)
- 20 November - World Children's Day
- 24 November - WAAW 'Go Blue for AMR'

Annex 3 – Tripartite infographics, social media tiles, and other media

The Tripartite organizations have created global and regionally-specific visual media that are freely available in multiple languages for use in your own virtual and/or in-person events. You can access these below.

Organization's specific resources:

FAO: www.fao.org/antimicrobial-resistance

OIE: <https://www.oie.int/en/what-we-do/global-initiatives/antimicrobial-resistance/>

WHO: <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-antimicrobial-awareness-week/2021>

Annex 4 – What is ‘antimicrobial resistance’?

Antimicrobials – including antibiotics, antivirals, antifungals and antiparasitics – are medicines used to treat infections in humans, animals and plants.

All around the world bacteria, viruses, fungi, and parasites are changing and starting not to respond to the medicines used to treat the infections they cause. This antimicrobial resistance emerges naturally, usually through genetic changes. However, the overuse and misuse of antimicrobials have accelerated the development of antimicrobial resistance, as has a lack of clean water and sanitation and inadequate infection prevention and control. This makes infections harder to treat, which increases the risk of disease spread, severe illness and death.

The rise of drug-resistant pathogens threatens to undo more than a century’s work of health progress and undermine the very foundations of modern medicine. For example, bacterial infections resistant to antibiotics could make vital medical procedures like organ transplants, joint replacements, cancer care, and care of preterm infants too dangerous to perform. AMR can affect anyone, of any age, in any country.

Antimicrobial resistance also affects and is affected by animals and the environment. The use of antimicrobials in animal health is driven by the large and growing burden of animal diseases, the increasing scale of animal production, and underinvestment in veterinary services and animal health. Reducing the inappropriate use of antimicrobials in animals must address these underlying issues.⁴



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⁴ Prior to 2020, WAAW was known as World *Antibiotic* Awareness Week. The change to ‘World Antimicrobial Awareness Week’ in 2020 was intended to facilitate a more inclusive global response to drug resistance