



## HUMAN HEALTH AND INDUSTRIAL FARMING

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### GETTING SMART ABOUT ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has proclaimed November 15-21, 2010 as "Get Smart About Antibiotics Week." This event is an opportunity for Americans to learn about the importance of these life-saving drugs.

Too often, we take antibiotics for granted. These essential drugs save untold numbers of human lives every day. Modern medicine depends on the ability of health care providers to treat and prevent infections. But our ability to count on antibiotics to save lives may be threatened.

Drug-resistant bacteria are spreading in our hospitals, our communities and our food supply. Resistance is fueled by injudicious use of existing drugs and compounded by a failure to invest adequately in the development of new ones. Bacteria with the NDM-1 gene are the world's newest "superbugs," now appearing in newspaper headlines alongside MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*).

The Pew Charitable Trusts joins the CDC in recognizing that 'no single strategy can solve the antibiotic resistance problem; a multi-pronged solution is required,' including a national investment in the development of new antibiotics. As the CDC notes:

- *We must eliminate all non-judicious uses of antibiotics -- in human medicine, animal medicine, and industrial food animal production.*
- *New and safe antibiotics are not easy to discover and develop.*
- *There are not enough new antibiotics being researched or developed, and we must promote the development of new antibiotics to treat serious and life-threatening infections.*
- *Because it will be many years before new antibiotics are available to treat some resistant infections, we must do a better job of emphasizing appropriate use of the antibiotics that are currently available.*
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Patients, families, doctors, hospitals, the pharmaceutical industry and our nation's leaders must work together not only to protect and preserve the antibiotics we have today, but also to develop the new antibiotics we will need tomorrow.

*The Antibiotics and Innovation Project is an initiative of the Pew Health Group, the health and consumer-product safety arm of The Pew Charitable Trusts, a non-governmental organization that applies a rigorous, analytical approach to improve public policy, inform the public and stimulate civic life.*

*The Pew Campaign on Human Health and Industrial Farming is a joint effort of the Pew Health Group and the Pew Environment Group working to phase out the routine use of antibiotics in food animal production. Learn more at*

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