



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**20 NOVEMBER 2016**

## **ACD SUPPORTS GLOBAL ANTIBIOTICS AWARENESS WEEK**

The [Australasian College of Dermatologists \(ACD\)](#) is pleased to announce its support of [global Antibiotic Awareness Week](#) (14-20 November 2016), an annual initiative designed to raise awareness of the serious health issue of antibiotic resistance.

This year, a key focus is on hand hygiene as a vital way of preventing the spread of infection. The initiative also enables health providers, consumers and healthcare stakeholders to start important conversations with patients about reducing the need for antibiotics, where appropriate.

Associate Professor, Chris Baker, President of the ACD, says:

“The ACD supports the responsible use of antibiotics and for them to be only prescribed when clinically necessary in order to reduce antibiotic resistance. Hand hygiene is important not only clinically, but also in everyday life. Hand washing is a simple activity that reduces the spread of cross-infection and the need for antibiotics.”

A number of recommendations around antibiotics use have been released by the ACD under the Choosing Wisely Australia® initiative, facilitated by NPS MedicineWise.

NPS MedicineWise Client Relations Manager Dr Robyn Lindner said Antibiotic Awareness Week provides an opportunity to remind clinicians and consumers about the latest recommendations around the appropriate use of antibiotics.

“Choosing Wisely is promoting the importance of informed conversations about the right care. It draws on the expertise of Australia’s peak medical bodies to develop lists of the tests, treatments, medicines and procedures that clinicians and consumers should question. This includes the appropriate use of antibiotics and understanding the risks of antibiotic resistance.”

The ACD recommends caution before health professionals prescribe antibiotics in three key areas: lower limb bilateral redness and swelling; epidermal cysts; and acne vulgaris.

**1. Bilateral redness and swelling of both lower legs:**

Do not assume that bilateral redness and swelling of both lower legs is due to infection. Antibiotics should not be prescribed unless there is clear clinical evidence of infection, followed up by confirmatory microbiology. Bilateral leg cellulitis is very rare. Most commonly, the bilateral inflammation is due to underlying skin disease such as venous eczema, dry skin, irritant or allergic contact dermatitis, or secondary lymphoedema.

**2. Epidermal cysts:**

Antibiotics should not be prescribed for inflamed epidermal cysts unless infection is confirmed via microbiology test results. These inflammatory cysts are rarely infected. In most cases, the redness, swelling tenderness is secondary to inflammation caused by the cyst contents and will respond to incision and drainage plus/minus intralesional corticosteroids.

**3. Acne vulgaris:**

Systemic antibiotic monotherapy should not be prescribed for acne vulgaris. To reduce further development of antibiotic resistance, combine with topical antiseptics such as



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benzoyl peroxide. Differentiating acne vulgaris from other forms of folliculitis is necessary prior to instituting acne therapy.

<http://www.choosingwisely.org.au/recommendations/acd>

“For some conditions, antibiotics aren’t always the best treatment available. More than 50% of Propionibacterium acne species are resistant to the tetracycline and macrolide antibiotics used in the treatment of acne. The antibiotics do however have a therapeutic anti-inflammatory effect in acne even though their antibacterial efficacy is diminished as a result of the emergence of resistant strains. Topical Benzoyl Peroxide has an antibacterial effect so using the two agents together allows us to continue to treat mild to moderate acne,” said A/Prof Baker.

For further information on the ACD, visit [www.dermcoll.edu.au](http://www.dermcoll.edu.au), or see our updates on [Facebook](#) or Twitter at [@DermatologyACD](#) #Dermatology

To find out more, and to access resources so you can get involved in this year’s Antibiotic Awareness Week, go to [nps.org.au/aaw2016](http://nps.org.au/aaw2016). NPS MedicineWise has also published a one-minute video, ‘[Six steps to clean hands](#)’, available on our YouTube channel.

**ENDS**

**About the Australasian College of Dermatologists (ACD):**

The ACD is the peak medical college accredited by the Australian Medical Council for the training and professional development of medical practitioners in the specialty of dermatology.

**Media enquiries:**

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