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### **Veterinarians and their Teams Serve as Critical Line of Defense Against Antimicrobial Resistance**

*The AAFP and AAHA release the 2022 Antimicrobial Stewardship Guidelines to Support Efforts*

**Lakewood, Colo. and Bridgewater, NJ (July 7, 2022)** – Antimicrobial resistance due to antibiotic overuse and misuse is a growing threat to human and animal health. Recognizing the important role veterinary teams play in helping keep this danger at bay, the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) and the American Association of Feline Practitioners (AAFP) have published their joint recommendations for safeguarding our antibiotics and preventing antimicrobial resistance.

*The 2022 AAFP/AAHA Antimicrobial Stewardship Guidelines* present evidence-guided strategies that veterinarians and their teams can use in choosing appropriate antimicrobial therapy to best serve their patients and minimize the development of antimicrobial resistance.

“This effort is critical to ensure we continue to have drugs that are effective against bacterial infections,” explains Erin Frey, DVM, MPH, DACVPM, coauthor and task force chair of the Guidelines. “Bacterial pathogens will always find ways to resist antibiotics, but overuse of antibiotics or using them when it’s not necessary expedites this process, ultimately leaving us with bacteria that are impervious to treatment. The result is a scenario in which we don’t have the tools to treat life-threatening bacterial infections because the available antibiotics are no longer effective.”

The guidelines offer a practical approach for veterinary teams that emphasizes making decisions that optimize patient outcomes and ensure that antibiotics are used only when necessary to treat infections. The top tenets of the guidelines include:

- Practice good preventive medicine, monitor health routinely, and keep vaccinations updated.
- Teach clients about good animal care practices and hygiene.

- Use other alternatives to oral antibiotics such as bathing, sprays, or ointments.
- Consider “watchful waiting” to observe whether a condition truly needs antibiotics or if patients can clear it on their own.
- Use diagnostic testing to determine if an infection is bacterial and would respond to antibiotics.

Client education about preventive care is an important element in these guidelines. “The entire veterinary team as well as clients should be involved in this effort. These Guidelines will support our collective responsibility to make good decisions about antimicrobial use,” says Heather O’Steen, CAE and CEO of the AAFP.

AAHA’s guidelines provide the most current, non-biased information available around clinically relevant topics.

"Antimicrobial stewardship is one of the most important public health issues facing the profession," says Jessica Vogelsang, DVM, AAHA Chief Medical Officer. "Veterinary teams play a critical role in protecting the health and welfare of people and pets, so we are pleased to present tools to simplify that journey."

Learn more and download free resources at [the AAFP website](#).

IDEXX Laboratories, Inc. and Zoetis generously supported the development of the 2022 AAFP/AAHA Antimicrobial Stewardship Guidelines and resources through an educational grant to AAHA.

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### **About the American Animal Hospital Association**

Since 1933, the American Animal Hospital Association (AAHA) has been the only organization to accredit veterinary hospitals throughout the United States and Canada based on standards directly correlated to high-quality medicine and compassionate care. Accreditation in veterinary medicine is voluntary. The AAHA-accredited logo is the best way to know a practice has been evaluated by a third party. Look for the AAHA logo or visit [aaha.org](http://aaha.org).

### **About the American Association of Feline Practitioners**

[The American Association of Feline Practitioners \(AAFP\)](#) supports its members and improves the health and welfare of cats by supporting high standards of practice, continuing education, and evidence-based medicine. As a trusted leader in the veterinary community, the AAFP has a long-standing reputation and track record for facilitating high standards, including guidelines for practice excellence and educational resources. Over the years, the AAFP has encouraged veterinary professionals to continuously re-evaluate preconceived notions of practice strategies in an effort to advance the quality of feline medicine practiced. Launched in 2012, [the Cat Friendly Practice® \(CFP\) Program](#) was created to improve the treatment, handling, and overall healthcare provided to cats. Its purpose is to equip veterinary practices, teams, and individuals

with the tools and resources to reduce stress associated with the visit and elevate the standard of care provided to cats. Launched in 2020, [the Cat Friendly Certificate Program](#) now provides this education to individual veterinary professionals. [Catfriendly.com](#), or Cat Friendly Homes, is the AAFP's cat caregiver educational resource which is powered by feline veterinarians and includes a monthly newsletter, The Cat Column.