



**Antibiotics: 'If you're not a doctor, don't play doctor.' The campaign promoted by AIFA in collaboration with the Ministry of Health is underway**

*Advertisements on Rai and Mediaset networks, dissemination in the press, local broadcasters and social media channels*

'If you're not a doctor, don't play doctor' is the slogan of the communication campaign on the responsible use of antibiotics, promoted by the Italian Medicines Agency in collaboration with the Ministry of Health. Adverts on Rai and Mediaset networks, dedicated spaces in the press and on local broadcasters, and dissemination on social media channels to raise awareness among citizens of the risks associated with "self-prescribing" these medicines, which should always be taken with a doctor's prescription and following the instructions.

Improper use contributes to the dramatic phenomenon of antimicrobial resistance, the ability of bacteria to strengthen and survive antibiotics, rendering them ineffective, with potentially serious consequences for health. Failure to control an infection can be life-threatening, especially for vulnerable patients.

Italy is still among the European countries with the highest consumption and worrying levels of germs that are multi-resistant to more than one class of antibiotics. According to the latest AIFA data (OsMed Report, 2025), at the regional level, antimicrobials (mainly antibiotics) account for the highest share of medicine consumption (1.7%) in Italy, surpassed only by France (2%). Furthermore, in our country, there has been a 7% increase in the period 2021-2024, more than in the rest of Europe (+4.4%).

This is a sign that greater efforts are needed to limit the use of antibiotics to cases of real need, avoiding "do-it-yourself" treatment. Reducing inappropriate consumption means taking them only after consulting a doctor, in the doses and for the time indicated, without prematurely interrupting treatment at the first sign of improvement in symptoms, and not using antibiotics left over from previous treatments. It means being aware that seasonal flu is caused by viruses and not bacteria and that, therefore, resorting to antibiotics in these cases, in addition to producing no benefits, can worsen the health of the sick person and expose them to undesirable and even serious side effects.

With a touch of irony, the campaign warns against relying on self-diagnosis by consulting 'Dr Google' or artificial intelligence, and stresses the importance of not resorting to self-medication with antibiotics at the first sign of flu symptoms.

‘The responsible use of antibiotics,’ says Health Minister **Orazio Schillaci**, ‘is necessary to combat bacterial resistance, which, as we know, then translates into the risk of hospital infections. With this campaign, we want to raise awareness among citizens not to consume antibiotics without consulting their doctor to ensure appropriateness and adequate therapeutic adherence. Antibiotic resistance is a public health priority that sees the Ministry engaged on several fronts, including in the development of antibiotics. However, it is a challenge that requires the commitment of everyone: institutions, healthcare professionals and citizens.’

‘With this communication initiative, we aim to discourage “do-it-yourself” approaches, strongly emphasising that you should never replace your doctor. It is important to understand that antibiotics should be used when necessary,’ explains AIFA President **Robert Nisticò**, ‘and only your doctor can assess on a case-by-case basis whether to prescribe an antibiotic and which one is most appropriate, taking into account various factors, because not all antibiotics are the same. Another key word is prevention: we can do a lot to limit infections through hygiene measures and responsible behaviour, especially in hospitals and long-term care facilities, where we have more fragile and exposed patients and where it is even more important to be vigilant. Only a commitment by everyone towards a common goal can help us keep these valuable health tools effective for the future.’