



Frequently Asked Question
Introduction of Antibiotic-free Meat

Q: Why is Advocate phasing in meat raised without antibiotics?

A: We are phasing in meats raised without antibiotics because it is the right thing to do, and it is a part of our environmental stewardship and antibiotic stewardship programs. By purchasing meat raised without antibiotics, Advocate supports the responsible use of antibiotics in agriculture which helps slow down antibiotic resistance and saves this precious treatment for the people who really need it.

Q: What types of meat raised without antibiotics will be available?

A: Beginning on October 26, 2015, all ground beef and beef patties, along with roast turkey (as available), will be sourced from animals raised without antibiotics.

Q: Where will meat raised without antibiotics be served?

A: Beginning October 26, 2015, all ground beef, beef patties and roast turkey (as available) served in Advocate's hospital cafeterias and included on patient menus will be sourced from animals raised without the use of antibiotics.

Q: Will the introduction of meat raised without antibiotics impact the cost of cafeteria meals?

A: Yes, there will be an incremental price increase in retail cafeterias to offset the price difference for meals containing these meats. It is anticipated that Advocate's menu items using meats raised without antibiotics will increase by \$ 0.18-\$0.30 per entrée. Costs are typically higher due to the length of time it takes to raise animals naturally resulting in higher production costs.

Q: How was the decision made to move toward meat raised without antibiotics?

A: Based on the mounting research, Advocate's Antimicrobial Stewardship Team made a recommendation that Advocate purchase meat raised without antibiotics or with responsible antibiotic use. This recommendation, part of a comprehensive strategy, was

approved by Infection Prevention Team, Health Outcomes Council, Support Operations Council and Senior Leadership.

Q: What is antibiotic resistance?

A: Antibiotics are unique medications, because unlike most medications, the more that antibiotics are used, the less effective they become. This happens because bacteria become resistant to antibiotics over time, which is known as “antibiotic resistance” and is a major public health threat around the world. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that more than 2 million Americans develop bacterial infections that are resistant to antibiotics every year, which leads to at least 23,000 deaths annually.

Q: What is antibiotic stewardship?

We can slow down antibiotic resistance by using antibiotics only when they are truly needed, and this is known as “antibiotic stewardship.” Antibiotic stewardship means using antibiotics wisely and responsibly; it means giving the right drug to the right person (or animal), for the right reason, and for the right amount of time. Advocate has an antibiotic stewardship program and purchasing meats raised without antibiotics or with responsible antibiotic use is a part of that program.

Q: How does the use and overuse of antibiotics in livestock affect us?

A: It is estimated that 80 percent of the antibiotics sold in the U.S. are given to animals raised for food, primarily to enhance growth and prevent disease in healthy animals. This overuse of antibiotics in food animal production promotes antibiotic resistance. A large body of research has linked this overuse to antibiotic-resistant infections in people. This is not a responsible use of antibiotics. By purchasing meat raised without antibiotics, Advocate supports the responsible use of antibiotics in agriculture.

Q: Do I need to be worried about eating meat raised with antibiotics?

A: The Food and Drug Administration requires a withdrawal period before an animal can be processed as food which ensures that the animal does not have any antibiotics left in its system when it is prepared for consumption. However, because antibiotics were overused on the farm, it is possible that the bacteria on the meat could be antibiotic-resistant. This means that if your meat is undercooked and you get sick from bacteria on

the meat, that infection could be harder to treat. This is one reason why it is so important to use safe cooking practices and cook your food completely. Farm workers are also at risk for acquiring antibiotic-resistant infections from working on the farm, and antibiotic-resistant bacteria and antibiotic residues are showing up in our soil and waterways, too.

Q: Will more meatless options be available in cafeterias and on patient menus?

A: Medical experts recommend reducing the amount of red meat we consume as a way to prevent cardiovascular disease and decrease mortality rates. Advocate will enhance its meatless options in cafeterias and patient menus, which will help promote healthy meal choices for patients, associates, physicians, and visitors.

Q: Where can I learn more about this issue and get involved?

A: Here are some great resources to learn more:

[Get Smart about Antibiotics](#) by the CDC

[Antibiotics Use in Food-Producing Animals](#) by the CDC

[Antibiotic Resistance Project](#) by the Pew Charitable Trusts

[Healthy Food in Health Care: Antibiotics](#) by Health Care Without Harm

Q: Can I buy meat raised without antibiotics at home?

A: Yes! There are increasing options available for purchasing meat raised without antibiotics, but labels on food packaging can be confusing. Here are a few resources to help you find what you're looking for in the supermarket:

[Understanding Labels: Meat & Poultry](#) by Health Care Without Harm

[Meat on Drugs](#) by Consumer Reports

References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States, 2013*. Accessed October 21, 2013 from <http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/threat-report-2013/pdf/ar-threats-2013-508.pdf>.
2. Pew Charitable Trusts. *Antibiotic Resistance and Food Animal Production: A Bibliography of Scientific Studies (1969-2013)*. Accessed October 21, 2013 from <http://www.pewtrusts.org/en/research-and-analysis/issue-briefs/2013/05/21/bibliography-on-antibiotic-resistance-and-food-animal-production>.
3. US House, Committee of Energy and Commerce. *Antibiotic Resistance and the Use of Antibiotics in Animal Agriculture*. Hearing, July 14, 2010 (Serial No. 111-144). Washington: Government Printing Office, 2013.
4. Natural Resources Defense Council. *Positions of Medical & Scientific Organizations on Antibiotic Use in Livestock Operations*. Accessed October 21, 2013 from <http://www.nrdc.org/food/files/saving-anitbiotics-med-quotes-FS.pdf>.