

Important information about how to use and prescribe antibiotics!

It is important for you, who are going to work as a veterinarian in Sweden, have knowledge of the requirements imposed on you in your professional work, especially on what you use and prescribe of antibiotics for animals.

Sweden has a better situation than many other countries in terms of antibiotic use and resistance. This is due to many years of targeted work with preventive measures to achieve good animal health and good animal protection. Sweden has the lowest consumption of antibiotics for animals within the EU, and the occurrence of resistant bacteria is relatively low, but the problems are increasing both globally and also in Sweden. In order to counteract a negative development, it is therefore important that you as a veterinarian do the right thing when using and prescribing antibiotics.

Things to consider before prescribing antibiotics and other medicines

In Sweden, only veterinarians are allowed to prescribe drugs for the treatment of animals.

To do so, you must have ensured that several criteria are met:

- There must be a need for the treatment.
- You make the assessment that the animal will respond to the treatment.
- You make the assessment that the use does not risk leading to increased antibiotic resistance
- Antibiotics may not be used routinely
- Antibiotics may not be used to compensate for poor hygiene, poor husbandry or care, or to compensate for poor agriculture practices.
- Antibiotics may not be used on animals to promote animal growth or to increase yield.

Read more on the Swedish Board of Agriculture's website: [Prescription of medicines](#).

Conditions where you can provide medicine to staff

When you have prescribed a medicine for an individual animal, you may, under certain conditions, provide the medicine to an animal nurse or an animal keeper so

that they can administer the medicine to the animal. Read more on the Swedish Board of Agriculture's web pages: [Provision to staff](#).

Conditions where you can prescribe and provide medicine to animal keepers

You may prescribe medicine for the treatment of an animal if you judge that the animal keeper has sufficient knowledge to be able to administer the medicine correctly and safely. You may only prescribe the amount of medication required for the current treatment. Note that prescriptions for antimicrobial drugs are only valid for five days. Therefore, you have to inform the animal keeper to collect the prescription in time.

In Sweden, it is not permitted for veterinarians to sell medicines. Only approved pharmacies are allowed to sell medicine for animals in Sweden, regardless of whether it is in a store or online. If an animal keeper has difficulty getting to a pharmacy, you may hand out medicines directly to the animal keeper in the form of a so-called "jour-dose" (acute dose). But you may only give out the amount of medicine required for the animal to receive its treatment until the animal keeper can pick up more medicine at a pharmacy.

When prescribing and providing medication, you must provide detailed written instructions to the animal keeper on how the medication is to be used and what to do with any leftover medicine.

Conditional drug use (ViLA)

Conditional drug use (ViLA - Villkorad Läkemedelsanvändning), means that under certain conditions and as part of preventive animal health care, a veterinarian can prescribe certain drugs to herds of cattle, pigs, sheep and goats, so that a livestock keeper can treat particular symptoms in their animals without contacting you before each treatment. To be allowed to prescribe medicines for ViLA, you need special training. There are a number of additional conditions to meet to be allowed to work with ViLA in animal herds. Read more on the Swedish Board of Agriculture's website: [Prescription and supply to animal owners](#).

Prescription of drugs in feed

If you prescribe medicine in feed, you must use a specific veterinary prescription form for feed containing medicine. Read more on the Swedish Board of Agriculture's website: [Prescribing feed that contains medicine](#)

Basic principles when prescribing antibiotics

When you prescribe antibiotics, you should primarily prescribe a medicine that contains penicillin, on the condition, that you judge that penicillin will have a sufficiently good effect. If you judge that penicillin is not expected to have a sufficiently good effect, you may prescribe a medicine that contains a substance

with as low a risk of resistance as possible according to [EMA's \(European Medical Agency's\) guidelines](#).

Choice of medication

When you choose which drug to treat an animal with, you should primarily choose a drug that is intended for the current condition of the current animal species. If there is no such medicine, you can choose another medicine according to the so-called cascade principle.

The cascade principle

The cascade principle is regulated in the [EU regulation on veterinary medicinal products](#) and has been divided into three articles: Non-food-producing animals, Terrestrial food-producing animals and Aquatic food-producing animals. Read more in the EU regulation ([Article 112](#), [Article 113](#) and [Article 114](#).)

The EU regulation states that if you choose to use medicines that are not approved for the animal species and the condition in question, it is at your own direct responsibility, and that it should only be done to avoid causing the animal unnecessary suffering. Read more on the Swedish Board of Agriculture's web pages: [Selection of medicines and the cascade principle](#).

Antibiotics that may not be used in animals

Antibiotics that contain substances listed at the end of this document with the heading "Antibiotics that may not be used in animals" can not be used in animals at all. The cascade principle therefore does not apply to medicines that are to be used exclusively for the treatment of certain infections in humans. In addition to these antibiotics, there are also Swedish regulations that state that you may not use mupirocin or rifabutin for animals either. Read more on the Swedish Board of Agriculture's website: [Medicinal products that may not be used in animals](#).

You must keep a journal

You must keep a journal of all treatments. When you prescribe a treatment with antimicrobial drugs, you must also justify in the medical record both why you treated the animal with antibiotics and why you chose a certain substance. Read more on the Swedish Board of Agriculture's website: [Keep records](#).

Provide information on treatments with antimicrobial drugs

As a veterinarian, you must submit information (report) to the Swedish Board of Agriculture about the antimicrobial drugs you have used and prescribed for chickens, turkeys, pigs and cattle. From 2026 you even have to report for more animal species. Read more on the Swedish Board of Agriculture's website: [Provide information about treatments with antimicrobial drugs](#).

Report occurrence of certain resistant bacteria in animals

If the following types of bacteria are found in animals, the veterinarian taking the sample, or the laboratory analysing the sample, must report this to the Swedish Board of Agriculture and the county administrative board:

- methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA)
- methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus pseudintermedius* (MRSP)
- other methicillin-resistant coagulase-positive staphylococci
- carbapenemase-forming Enterobacterales (ESBLcarba).

Read more on the Swedish Board of Agriculture's website: [Registration obligation](#).

Requirements for a hygiene plan for clinical working veterinarians

Healthcare-related infections lead to increased use of antibiotics and increased risk of developing antibiotic resistance. Deficiencies in hygiene increase the risk of care-related infections with resistant bacteria. Therefore, there is a requirement for a hygiene plan where veterinary medical care is provided. The hygiene plan must be in writing; except when a veterinarian works in own company without employees and does not share premises or equipment with anyone else. Read more on the Swedish Board of Agriculture's website: [Hygiene plan](#).

Antibiotics that may not be used in animals

Carboxipenicillins, Ureidopenicillins, Ceftobiprole, Ceftaroline, Combinations of cephalosporins with betalactamase inhibitors, Siderofora cephalosporines, Carbapenems, Penem, Monobactams, Phosphonic Acid Derivatives, Glykopeptides, Lipopeptides, Oxazolidinones, Fidaxomicin, Plazomicin, Glycylcyclines, Eravacycline, Omadacycline.

Swedish regulations state that you may not use mupirocin or rifabutin for animals either.

Animal Health Unit

Swedish Board of Agriculture