

# FIT Webqoof: Can Giving Antibiotics to Chickens Lead to Cancer?

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## Are Chickens Pumped with Antibiotics and Steroids?

FIT reached out to Centre for Disease Dynamic, Economics and Policy (CDDEP), South Asia head, Jyoti Joshi for a comment. CDDEP has done extensive research into antibiotic resistance in poultry farming in India.

Prof Joshi says research into antibiotic usage in poultry farming is at best patchy in India. But antibiotics have been used to bolster poultry production for decades by the industry.

*Jyoti Joshi, Researcher, CDDEP:* US scientists discovered by chance that chicken grew faster when they were given even low doses of antibiotics. So today, antibiotics are rampantly use in animal farms to give us an advantage when our nutrition is not very good, but giving antibiotics to every single chicken is a recipe for the disaster that we are now facing: Antibiotic resistance.

The problem and scale of antibiotic resistance, caused partially by its overuse in poultry farming, has been explained well by Prof Laxminarayan Ramanan in an earlier video with FIT. You can watch the video in the link below:

Also Read: [Watch | Post-Antibiotic Era Is Now a Very Real Scenario](#)

In fact in 2018, the government had proposed a ban on the use of antibiotic colistin that is popularly used in the poultry industry in India to make animals grow faster, according to [this](#) report.

Prof Joshi further elaborates on the threat:

The use of antibiotics in food animals plays a major role in development and spread of drug-resistant infections. These drug-resistant infections, in turn get transmitted between humans and animals through direct contact, in food products, and from the environment. The transmission of antimicrobial resistant genes across species into

wild animals, other farm animals and even humans is well known, thus aggravating antimicrobial resistance in nature.

She further adds, "Antimicrobial resistance has been cited by the World Health Organization as one of the top 10 global health threats in 2019 and is estimated to cause at least 700,000 deaths every year. If it continues unabated, almost \$100 trillion of economic output is at risk because of the rise of drug-resistant infections by 2050."

## **Are These Chickens Cancerous?**

So it's established that poultry and meat industry rampantly abuses antibiotics for profits and that has led to serious health concerns for the world. But are these chickens cancerous? FIT reached out to a leading oncologist from Apollo Hospitals in Delhi for a comment.

Dr Samir Kaul says "Current there are no concrete scientific studies that establish the link to cancer. But it is important to pay attention to the quality of meat that we eat."

Prof Joshi also talks about the quality of meat we eat.

In my opinion, in order to tackle this menace, consumers need to demand antibiotic-free meat including chicken. In the US, consumer movement is growing and due to consumer pressure, several fast food chains today serve and advertise the use of antibiotic-free chicken in their menus.

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