In Response to Consumer Demand, Costco Stops Selling Antibiotic Laden Chicken

Costco has decided to phase out the sale of chickens that have been treated with shared-use antibiotics. This is a big win in a few ways. First, the low levels of antibiotics meant for human use that find their way into the raising of conventional meat make the antibiotics less effective, as they only succeed in killing the low-level bacteria and creating antibiotic resistant superbugs by allowing the stronger strains to survive. Second, consumers who are voting with their dollars for healthier meat that isn't full of unnecessary hormones and antibiotics are being heard. This announcement from Costco comes on the heels of a similar announcement from McDonalds. McDonalds and Costco, the third largest retailer in the US, are deciding to go against traditionally accepted agricultural practices because of public pressure and demand, showing that informed consumers can and do make a difference.

Antibiotic Resistant Superbugs

Antibiotics began as a way for medicine to fight the most serious of infections. Now it feels like they're used to treat anything and everything, from pneumonia to ear infections to acne. They're also being used to continually dose factory farmed animals, which is giving virulent bacteria capable of surviving weaker antibiotics an opportunity to thrive. Costco's decision to stop purchasing animals who have been dosed with human-use antibiotics will have a positive long term effect on the effectiveness of antibiotics and make immune systems stronger.

The best immunity you can have is a natural immunity.

Fortifying your immune system through diet and exercise can keep you from getting sick, but our overuse of antibiotics is not helping. It’s like giving the bacteria a ten second head start in a race to see which organism wins. If you’re exposed to a low level strain of bacteria and beat the infection, it gives your immune system more protection against stronger version of that particular infection. Low level dosages of antibiotics kill the weak bacteria, combining with the sickening conditions of factory farming to create ideal condition for antibiotic resistant, transmittable to humans infections like E Coli, Salmonella, and Staph. Feeding antibiotics to factory farmed animals is not only unnecessary and unhealthy, it’s dangerous. The groups receiving long-term benefits from this practice are big agricultural companies and big pharmaceutical companies. When major retailers like Costco and McDonalds choose to stop purchasing those products, the lack of that business sends a powerful message.

Seeing Food Differently

People care about what’s in their food. From labeling GMOs to buying organic to finding local farmers they can trust, consumers are using their dollars to advocate for food transparency. Chipotle is famous for letting consumers know what’s in their food. They label local products and GMOs, offer organic ingredients, and use responsibly raised meat without added hormones and sub-therapeutic antibiotics. Lobbyists for the meat industry like to claim that antibiotics save farmers money and therefore save consumers money. When Chipotle chose to purchase meat from responsibly raised animals, they had to increase prices. Rather than cause an outrage, their sales doubled.

The food landscape is changing. People now think before they eat, and cheap, fast, unhealthy food is on the decline. McDonald’s recent sales reports showed that earnings were down 1.7% worldwide and down by 4% in the United States. In light

of that, it’s not hard to see their decision to phase out chickens treated with shared-use antibiotics is a desperate grab for an informed public who is no longer willing to accept their chemical-laden excuse for food. Costco cited human health as their primary reason for beginning to phase out meat treated with human use antibiotics. Consumers are having an impact, and major retailers are listening and adjusting their actions. This momentum is huge.

Keep It Going

The best way to keep encouraging food transparency is to continue to ask for it and to pay for it. You can get involved in legislation that asks for labels, like those for labeling GMOs. Find out if your state has proposed any labeling laws recently and call your representative. The U.S. Senate recently introduced a bill (S.621) designed to minimize the development of antibiotic resistant bacteria while taking care of animals. Buy organic and local produce and meat whenever possible. Local farmer’s markets offer a great opportunity to speak with the farmers and get to know what they’re doing. Getting healthy and fixing your immune system can reduce the potential negative impact of irresponsibly raised meat on your health.

If you have been eating conventional chicken or other meats laced with antibiotics, it’s time to restore your intestinal flora.

For more on the detrimental impact of convention farming methods and how we can change the world with progressive farming, check out the first two sources below.

Sources:

- *Costco Wants to End Use of Human Antibiotics in Chicken – NBC News*
- *Antibiotic resistant bacteria found in hospitals likely*

came from industrial livestock farms – Natural News

- *Make Your Immune System Bulletproof with these Natural Remedies* – Organic Lifestyle Magazine
- *Consumers Steer Clear of Meat Raised with Antibiotics* – Healthline
- *McDonald's global profits free fall as people everywhere increasingly reject chemically-altered toxic fast food* – Natural News
- *Text of Preventing Antibiotic Resistance Act of 2015* – Govtrack