

Your plate of chicken may have antibiotics too

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Singapore: A study conducted by the Center for Science and Environment (CSE), India indicated that indiscriminate use of antibiotics in poultry farming could be strongly linked to the spread of antibiotic resistant bacteria in the community.

The study, conducted on 70 chicken samples sold in Delhi, found that 40 per cent of the samples contained residues of various antibiotics in them. The research was performed in response to various alerts issued by global health experts on increased spread of antibiotic resistance in the community.

The samples contained residues of 3 parts per billion and up to 31 parts per billion of antibiotics per kilogram. Ideally, "The safe limit is zero," said Mr Chandra Bhushan, deputy director general, CSE. He added, "Adding antibiotic to chicken feed of one chicken saves a poultry farm ₹125 per kg of chicken meat."

Mr Bhushan mentioned, "It was found that large scale, unregulated use of antibiotics in poultry resulted in increased dissemination of these antibiotics among Indians. This increases the risk of Indians falling prey to otherwise curable ailments."

CSE further stressed that poultry farmers were using antibiotics like ciprofloxacin, to encourage faster growth in chicken. The center emphasized that reckless use of such antibiotics can eventually make bacteria in them to become drug resistant.

CSE noted that there was no regulation by the Indian government controlling the use of antibiotics in chicken, unlike the foreign countries. Mr Bhushan said that prescription of antibiotics are freely available in India and there is no law regulating its use in the poultry industry.