

# Drug Administration in Dairy Cows:

## Intrauterine Treatment



**WIFSS**

Western Institute for  
Food Safety & Security



## Overview

To treat infections in the uterus that can occur following calving, some dairy producers will infuse an antibiotic directly into the uterus by way of the vagina and cervix. While opinions differ on the efficacy of this treatment, it is a relatively common procedure on some dairies and it's important to have some knowledge of this method of drug delivery.

Currently in the United States no antibiotics are labelled for intrauterine administration. Because of this, intrauterine infusion of an antibiotic constitutes extra-label drug use and should only be performed under an established Veterinarian-Client-Patient-Relationship between the herd veterinarian and owner under the conditions that are outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations.

Penicillin and oxytetracycline are 2 antibiotics that are commonly used for intrauterine infusions. An intrauterine infusion is most commonly performed by placing one hand and arm into the cow's rectum and then using that hand to guide a sterile plastic insemination pipette that has been passed through the vagina and cervix into the uterus.



As this video starts the herd manager has already placed a plastic obstetrical sleeve over his left arm. He then applies a lubricant on that arm and passes his hand and arm into the cow's rectum. To prevent fecal contamination of the pipette as it is inserted into the vagina, the vulva is thoroughly cleaned with paper towels. As one final precaution against contamination, a clean paper towel is left in the opening of the vulva after cleaning. Next, a sterile single use plastic insemination pipette is passed into the vagina and gently advanced forward as the hand in the rectum guides the pipette through the cervix into the uterus. Once the pipette tip is in the body of the uterus, antibiotic is slowly injected. After the drug has been infused, the pipette and left hand are removed from the cow.

