The country has among the highest bacterial disease burden in the world and antibiotics have a critical role in limiting morbidity and mortality here, it stated.

The health ministry has proposed to limit the maximum amount of antibiotics that can be used in meat and meat products to ensure that antibiotic residue in food from animals does not threaten human health. The ministry's decision follows studies indicating that India's antimicrobial resistance problem is expected to worsen due to overuse of antibiotics in animals reared for consumption.

The ministry has specified the maximum permissible limits of various antibiotics in meat products, including chicken, in its latest amendments to the Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins & Residues) Regulations, 2011. For instance, the amendments prescribe the maximum permissible limits of 37 antibiotics and 67 other veterinary drugs for chicken, the ministry stated in a release.

"...internationally, use of antibiotic and pharmacologically active substances are prohibited in food stuff of animal origin including fish and fisheries products. Further, there is ample evidence of development of antibiotic resistance in human pathogen, if these substances continue to come through food," states the latest draft regulations.

The ministry has invited stakeholder objections and suggestions by December 6, 2017. These objections and suggestions will be placed before the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India’s (FSSAI) scientific panel on residues of pesticides and antibiotics. The panel's recommendations will be considered by the scientific committee and then the food authority for approval, following which it will be notified in the Gazette of India.
India’s antimicrobial resistance problem is expected to worsen because its consumption of antibiotics through animal sources is projected to nearly double during 2013-2030, according to a recent global study on antibiotic use in farm animals. The country is currently the fourth largest consumer of antibiotics in food animals globally, after China, United States and Brazil, showed the study, titled “Global solutions to reduce antimicrobial use in food animals”.

Read more For instance, two-thirds of poultry farms in Punjab use antibiotics and such farms have also reported high levels of multi-drug resistant bacteria that could easily escape into the environment, said Ramanan Laxminarayan, Director, Center for Disease Dynamics, Economics and Policy (CDDEP) and one of the study’s authors. at: