

Pharmacy Pearls

BE ANTIBIOTICS AWARE

As a reminder, November 12-18, 2018 is U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week. The CDC is urging healthcare professionals to prescribe antibiotics only when necessary to help fight antibiotic resistance and protect patients from adverse events. During U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week the CDC promotes *Be Antibiotics Aware*, an educational effort to raise awareness about the importance of safe antibiotic prescribing and use. CDC's *Be Antibiotics Aware* educational effort encourages healthcare professionals to:

Do you have a medication management question?

Contact

Jenny Radcliffe,
Pharm.D.

AHP Clinical Pharmacist

(585)758-7719

✉ Jennifer.Radcliffe@urmc.rochester.edu

- Follow clinical guidelines on whether to prescribe antibiotics and when prescribing antibiotics, to prescribe the right antibiotic at the right dose for the right duration at the right time.
- Shorten the duration of antibiotic therapy to the minimum effective duration. The goal is to maximize the benefit to the patient by curing the infection while minimizing the risks of antibiotic resistance and side effects.
- Protect your patients. Only prescribe antibiotics when they are needed. You can do harm by prescribing antibiotics that aren't needed.
- Tell your patients why they don't need antibiotics for a viral infection, what to do to feel better, and when to seek care again if they don't feel better.
- Talk to your patients and their families about possible harms from antibiotics, such as allergic reactions, *C. difficile*, and antibiotic-resistant infections.
- Educate your patients and their families so they can recognize the signs and symptoms of sepsis and know when to seek medical care for possible sepsis.



Antibiotics do not work on viruses such as colds and flu.

Outpatient Antibiotic Stewardship

Clinician tools to reduce unnecessary antibiotic use and improve first-line prescribing

1

NATIONAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

serve as a standard for antibiotic prescribing for common outpatient infectious diseases. Click [here](#) for adult and pediatric NYSDOH antibiotic guideline summaries.

2

EXAM ROOM POSTERS

displaying provider commitment to avoid inappropriate antibiotic use decreased antibiotic prescribing by 20%. Click [here](#) for the NYSDOH “Get Smart Guarantee” Poster. Click [here](#) for a letter template to communicate your commitment to your patients.

3

SYMPTOMATIC THERAPY

patients are more satisfied when given advice to manage symptoms along with an explanation of why antibiotics are not needed. Click [here](#) for the NYSDOH Viral Prescription Pad (available in [Spanish](#) and [multiple other languages](#)) — use the guideline in #1 above to identify symptomatic therapy options for acute rhinosinusitis, acute uncomplicated bronchitis, and common cold/URI).

4

WATCHFUL WAITING OR DELAYED PRESCRIBING

can be used when appropriate. You might consider it for conditions that usually resolve without treatment but might benefit from antibiotics if there is no improvement (e.g., acute rhinosinusitis or mild acute otitis media). Click [here](#) for a patient communication tool on watchful waiting and [here](#) for delayed prescribing.

5

PATIENT EDUCATION

decreasing patient perception of the need for an antibiotic for viral illness remains an important objective. Click [here](#) for the CDC Viruses or Bacteria Exam Room Poster and [here](#) for a Patient Brochure (available [Spanish](#) and [multiple other languages](#)).

6

COMMUNICATION

patient satisfaction is linked with the quality of communication when an antibiotic is not needed. Click [here](#) for a NYSDOH video on how to talk to patients about antibiotic use.

