

Antibiotic Stewardship

- The more antibiotics are used today, the less likely they will still work in the future. Therefore, healthcare providers and pharmacists around the world are trying to use antibiotics responsibly. This is called **antibiotic stewardship**.
- The goals of antibiotic stewardship are to choose the right antibiotic at the right dose and for the right length of time.
- Antibiotic stewardship programs are designed to:
 - Make sure that every patient gets the most benefit from antibiotics
 - Reduce the risk of allergic reactions and side effects
 - Help save antibiotics for the future

The Risks of Antibiotic Use

- Many patients are prescribed antibiotics when they may not be needed. This causes some bacteria to become resistant to the antibiotic.
- Overuse of antibiotics can kill “good” germs that protect against infection. This can lead to life-threatening diarrhea caused by a germ called *Clostridium difficile*, also known as **C. diff**.

Funded by the
Rochester Safety Collaborative:

Rochester Regional Health

ROCHESTER
REGIONAL HEALTH

UR Medicine



and

Excellus BlueCross BlueShield



Excellus BCBS is an independent organization working collaboratively with Rochester Regional Health and UR Medicine towards success on this project.

KNOW WHEN ANTIBIOTICS WORK:

A GUIDE TO ANTIBIOTIC STEWARDSHIP

INFORMATION FOR
PATIENTS & FAMILIES



Antibiotic Resistance: A Serious Public Health Concern

- Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria change in a way that stops antibiotics from working. Some bacteria are now resistant to all available antibiotics, making them very dangerous.
- **Causes of antibiotic resistance:**
 - Over-prescribing of antibiotics
 - Not taking antibiotics as prescribed
 - Lack of proper and frequent hand washing
 - Antibiotics used in animals

Did You Know?

- Antibiotics are the most important weapon we have to fight life-threatening bacterial infections and should only be used when necessary.
- Antibiotic resistance is one of the world's most serious public health threats.
- Antibiotics cause 1 out of 5 emergency department visits for drug-related side effects.
- *Clostridium difficile* (**C.diff**) is a type of bacteria that can cause severe, life-threatening diarrhea. This infection can happen to anybody, but often happens in elderly patients who have had both recent medical care and antibiotic therapy.

What You Can Do: Reduce the Risks of Antibiotic Use

- Become an antibiotic steward. Do not take or ask for antibiotics for colds or other viruses. They have no effect on viruses.
- Take antibiotics exactly how your healthcare provider tells you.
- Tell your healthcare provider if you have been on antibiotics within a few months and now have severe diarrhea.

Reduce the Need for Antibiotics

- Wash your hands often, especially after using the bathroom and before eating.
- Make sure all doctors, nurses and other healthcare providers wash their hands before and after caring for you.
- Stay up to date with vaccines to protect yourself and others you're in contact with.

Virus or Bacteria?

Illness	Antibiotic Needed?	
	Virus	Bacteria
Cold/Bronchitis	NO	
Whooping Cough		YES
Influenza (Flu)*	NO	
Strep Throat		YES
Sore Throat (<i>except Strep</i>)	NO	
Fluid in the Middle Ear	NO	
Bacteria in Urine		
• <i>With Symptoms</i>		YES
• <i>Without Symptoms</i>		NO

* Antiviral medications may be prescribed for influenza

Frequently Asked Questions

- How do I know if I have a viral or bacterial infection?
Ask your healthcare provider what to do next for diagnosis and treatment. Remember, colds are caused by viruses and should not be treated with antibiotics.
- Won't an antibiotic help me feel better quicker so that I can get back to work when I get a cold or the flu?
No. Antibiotics do not work for a viral illness. They will not help you feel better sooner. Ask your healthcare provider what else you can do to treat your symptoms.
- If mucus from the nose changes from clear to yellow or green, does that mean I need an antibiotic?
No. Yellow or green mucus does not mean that you have a bacterial infection. It is normal for mucus to get thick and change color when you have a viral illness.

Additional Information

- For more information about antibiotic stewardship, please visit:
 - CDC "**Get Smart About Antibiotics Week**" website: cdc.gov/getsmart/week
 - NPS Medicinewise Antibiotic Campaign website: nps.org.au/jointhefight