

# Friday Focus

## Emergence of Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria

Antibiotics have saved countless numbers of human lives since their invention in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, they may not be as useful much longer due to the emergence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Resistance occurs when bacteria exposed to antibiotics are not eradicated but are allowed time to adapt and, instead, survive and multiply. This problem is increasing across the globe and healthcare providers from every country are being called upon to help stop this growing dilemma.

So, as a healthcare provider, what can you do? The first step is to know when to treat a patient with antibiotics and when to choose alternative treatments. Antibiotics should only be prescribed for bacterial infections and never for viral infections. Needlessly prescribing antibiotics when a patient is suffering a viral infection will only do more harm than good. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), antibiotics “cause 1 out of 5 emergency department visits for adverse drug events” and “are the most common cause of emergency department visits for adverse drug events in children under 18 years of age.”

|  | Viruses | Bacteria | Needed    |
|--|---------|----------|-----------|
| Cold/Runny Nose  | ✓       |          | <b>NO</b> |
| Bronchitis/Chest Cold (in otherwise healthy children and adults) | ✓       |          | <b>NO</b> |
| Whooping Cough   |         | ✓        | Yes       |
| Flu  | ✓       |          | <b>NO</b> |
| Strep Throat   |         | ✓        | Yes       |
| Sore Throat (except strep)                                       | ✓       |          | <b>NO</b> |
| Fluid in the Middle Ear (otitis media with effusion)             | ✓       |          | <b>NO</b> |
| Urinary Tract Infection  |         | ✓        | Yes       |

Providers who have patients exhibiting symptoms of a viral infection can treat the symptoms and ask the patient to return in three days if symptoms have not resolved. Studies show educating patients on when antibiotics are actually needed and encouraging them to fully complete any antibiotics prescribed can greatly impact the way patients view these lifesaving medications.

To learn more about antibiotic resistance and what you can do, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/getsmart/community/for-hcp/index.html>

As always, we appreciate your ideas and feedback. Thank you for the quality work you do. All editions of the Friday Focus are available on the SWHP website: <https://swhp.org/en-us/prov/news/providers-friday-focus>

Rachelle Byroad, Clinical Quality Coordinator  
Quality Improvement Division

### References

*What Everyone Should Know.* (2015, April 17). Retrieved December 12, 2016, from [www.CDC.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
<http://www.cdc.gov/getsmart/community/about/should-know.html>