

October 2019

Antibiotic Awareness Week November 11 – 18, 2019

For one week in November, health care organizations and providers are asked to help raise awareness on the appropriate use of antibiotics and reduce the threat of antibiotic resistance.

Be Antibiotics Aware

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is urging health care professionals to prescribe antibiotics only when necessary to help fight antibiotic resistance. According to the CDC, at least 47 million unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions are written each year.

During U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week and throughout the year, the CDC promotes *Be Antibiotics Aware*, an educational effort to raise awareness on the importance of safe antibiotic prescribing and use. Many educational resources, including a partner toolkit, are available to help providers promote this event, which encourages health care professionals to:

- Protect patients. Only prescribe antibiotics when needed. It may be harmful to prescribe antibiotics that aren't needed.
- Follow clinical guidelines when prescribing antibiotics, ensuring the right antibiotic, at the right dose, for the right duration, at the right time.
- Reduce antibiotic therapy to the minimum effective duration – a key antibiotic stewardship strategy in all settings of health care. The goal is to maximize the benefit to the patient by curing the infection, while minimizing the risks of side effects and antibiotic resistance.
- Tell 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 patients and their families about possible harms from antibiotics, such as allergic reactions, *C. difficile* and antibiotic-resistant infections.
- Watch for signs of sepsis, which can be life threatening. If sepsis is suspected, send the patient for emergency care, obtain cultures and start antibiotics immediately.
- Follow hand hygiene and infection-prevention measures with every patient.

Toolkit and Additional Resources

Visit the CDC website for details on the [US Antibiotic Awareness Week](#) and the [Be Antibiotics Aware](#) initiative to find educational materials available to health care professionals in outpatient and inpatient settings.