



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Know When Antibiotics Help and When They Won't

U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week, November 18-24, 2019

SPRINGFIELD – Roughly 30% of antibiotics prescribed in medical providers' offices and emergency rooms are not needed. The over-prescribing and misuse of antibiotics could make the bacteria they are designed to kill resistant to the drug and ineffective for treatment. During U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week, Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Dr. Ngozi Ezike is urging everyone to learn when an antibiotic can help, and when it won't.

“Antibiotics are critical to treating many infections and saving lives, but when they are prescribed and taken unnecessarily, they can become less effective,” said Dr. Ezike. “Antibiotics don't work on viruses, like those that cause the common cold or the flu. Talk with your health care provider about what is making you sick and what is needed to get better.”

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), each year in the U.S., more than 2.8 million people get an antibiotic-resistant infection, and more than 35,000 people die. That means, on average, someone in the U.S. gets an antibiotic-resistant infection every 11 seconds, and every 15 minutes someone dies.

The CDC recently released its updated [Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States](#) (AR Threats Report) showing prevention efforts have reduced deaths from antibiotic-resistant infections by 18 percent overall, and by nearly 30 percent in hospitals. However, without continued vigilance, this progress may be challenged by the increasing burden of some infections.

Steps to help prevent antibiotic resistance:

- Ask your health care provider for appropriate remedies when antibiotics are not indicated.
- Do not insist on antibiotics when your health care provider thinks you do not need them.
- Complete the entire course of prescribed antibiotics even after you are feeling better.
- Stay up to date on your recommended vaccines to help prevent illness.
- Wash your hands regularly to stop the spread of disease.

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Do I need an antibiotic?

YES <u>Bacteria</u>	MAYBE <u>Bacteria or Virus</u>	NO <u>Virus</u>
Strep Throat Tuberculosis Whooping Cough Urinary Tract Infection	Bronchitis Ear Infection Sinus Infection	Flu Colds Sore throats (except strep)

IDPH is committed to continued collaboration with partners to implement and refine the [Illinois Action Plan to Prevent Healthcare-Associated Infections](#), and finalize the Illinois Multi-Drug Resistant Organism Surveillance Investigation and Response Plan. IDPH coordinates a regional response to identify affected patients, provide technical assistance to facilities on infection prevention and control practices, and improve communication between facilities by automatically notifying a facility when a patient known to have an antibiotic-resistant germ is admitted. IDPH will also continue to support antimicrobial stewardship by offering resources and technical assistance to health care facilities and prescribers to ensure antibiotics are appropriately used to treat infections. Preventing antibiotic resistance will help ensure these lifesaving drugs will continue to work in the future.

More information about healthcare-associated infections and antimicrobial resistance prevention in Illinois can be found on the IDPH website <http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/prevention-wellness/patient-safety-quality/hai-prevention>.

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