



BE ANTIBIOTICS AWARE

SMART USE, BEST CARE

U.S. ANTIBIOTIC AWARENESS WEEK

November 13-19, 2017

www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use



U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week (USAAW) is an annual observance highlighting the importance of being Antibiotics Aware and the steps everyone can take to improve antibiotic use or prescribing. Improving the way healthcare professionals prescribe antibiotics, and the way we take antibiotics, helps keep us healthy now, helps fight antibiotics resistance, and ensures that these life-saving drugs will be available for future generations. CDC encourages healthcare professionals, patients, and families to learn more about antibiotic prescribing and use.

When antibiotics aren't needed, they won't help you, and the side effects could still hurt you. Here are seven facts you should know to **Be Antibiotics Aware**:

- 1 Antibiotics save lives.** When a patient needs antibiotics, the benefits outweigh the risks of side effects or antibiotic resistance.
- 2 Antibiotics aren't always the answer.** Everyone can help improve antibiotic prescribing or use.
- 3 Antibiotics do not work on viruses,** such as colds and flu, or runny noses, even if the mucus is thick, yellow or green.
- 4 Antibiotics are only needed for treating certain infections caused by bacteria.** Antibiotics also won't help some common bacterial infections including most cases of bronchitis, many sinus infections, and some ear infections.
- 5 An antibiotic will not make you feel better if you have a virus.** Respiratory viruses usually go away in a week or two without treatment. Ask your healthcare professional about the best way to feel better while your body fights off the virus.
- 6 Taking antibiotics creates resistant bacteria.** Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria no longer respond to the drugs designed to kill them.
- 7 If you need antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed.** Talk with your doctor if you have any questions about your antibiotics, or if you develop any side effects, especially diarrhea, since that could be a *C. difficile* (*c. diff*) infection, which needs to be treated.



You can participate in U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week 2017 events, or host your own. There are many ways to get involved! Visit www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use to learn how to participate.

Did you know antibiotic resistance is one of the most urgent threats to the public's health? Here's what else you need to know:

- Any time antibiotics are used, they can cause side effects and lead to antibiotic resistance.
- Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria no longer respond to the drugs designed to kill them.
- Common side effects of antibiotics can include rash, dizziness, nausea, diarrhea, and yeast infections.
- More serious side effects include *Clostridium difficile* infection (also called *C. difficile* or *C. diff*), which causes diarrhea that can lead to severe colon damage and death. People can also have severe and life-threatening allergic reactions.
- Stay healthy and keep others healthy by cleaning hands, covering coughs, staying home when sick, and getting recommended vaccines, for the flu, for example.

To learn more about antibiotic prescribing and use, visit www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use.

Each year in the United States, at least **2 million** people get infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria. At least **23,000** people die as a result.

