



# BE ANTIBIOTICS AWARE

SMART USE, BEST CARE

## U.S. ANTIBIOTIC AWARENESS WEEK

November 12-18, 2018


[www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use](http://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use)



U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week (USAAW) is an annual observance highlighting the importance of improving antibiotic prescribing and use, also known as antibiotic stewardship. Improving the way healthcare professionals prescribe antibiotics, and the way we take antibiotics, helps keep us healthy now, helps fight antibiotic 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 usually outweigh the risks of side effects or antibiotic resistance.
- 2 Antibiotics aren't always the answer.** Everyone can help improve antibiotic prescribing and use.
- 3 Antibiotics do not work on viruses,** such as those that cause colds, flu, bronchitis, or runny noses, even if the mucus is thick, yellow, or green.
- 4 Antibiotics are only needed for treating infections caused by bacteria,** but even some bacterial infections get better without antibiotics, including many sinus infections and some ear infections.
- 5 Antibiotics 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 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 *Clostridium difficile* infection (also called *C. difficile* or *C. diff*), which needs to be treated.
- 7 Antibiotics are critical tools for treating a number of common infections,** such as pneumonia, and for life-threatening conditions including sepsis.



You can participate in CDC's U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week 2018 events, or host your own. There are many ways to get involved! Visit [www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use](http://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 about antibiotic resistance and side effects:

- 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, 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](http://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use).

Para saber más sobre la prescripción de antibióticos y su uso, visite [www.cdc.gov/antibioticos](http://www.cdc.gov/antibioticos).

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.



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