

## Antibiotic stewardship

*By the Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee*

According to the Infectious Diseases Society of America, “Antimicrobial stewardship is a coordinated program that promotes the appropriate use of antimicrobials (antibiotics), improves patient outcomes, reduces microbial resistance, and decreases the spread of infections caused by multidrug-resistant organisms.” Our goal at FCPHD is to promote good stewardship so that when those in our community are sick and need antibiotics, we have good options available to treat them.

Deciding when to seek professional treatment for illness for ourselves or loved ones can be difficult. It may seem frustrating that when you finally do seek treatment, you are told to continue only with supportive care (fluids, Tylenol, symptomatic treatment, etc.). If you wonder why you aren’t being prescribed an antibiotic, FCPHD’s Antimicrobial Stewardship Committee can help answer this question.

Nationwide, healthcare has seen a gradual increase in antimicrobial resistance: difficult to treat bacterial infections that do not respond to antibiotics as they did previously. Bacteria are living organisms that adapt to survive and once exposed to an antibiotic, they can develop a resistance, making the drug less effective in the future.

Some bacteria have now become super-bug resistant and are difficult to treat with almost any of our known antibiotics. Antibiotics are a precious healthcare resource that your provider needs to help protect by appropriately prescribing the right antibiotics - only when necessary. This may be why you are not being treated with an antibiotic for your illness.

Most common illnesses are caused by either bacteria or viruses. Antibiotics are only effective in treatment against bacterial infections, not viral infections. Many factors contribute to antimicrobial resistance: Using an antibiotic to treat a virus; using the wrong antibiotic; not taking the full course of antibiotics; or self-treating with leftover antibiotics.

When illnesses such as: fever, ear aches/infections, sinusitis, bronchitis, or nausea develop in adults or children, we highly recommend being seen as soon as possible by your provider. When unsure about the need to see a provider, please call your provider office for guidance.

November 13-19 is U.S. Antibiotic Awareness week. Take some time to explore the CDC’s website to learn more!

<https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/week/>

*Prior Hospital Happenings available at <http://www.fcphd.org/news.html>.*

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