

## **CDC advises patients and their families to Be Antibiotics Aware**

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is advising patients and their families to use antibiotics only when necessary to reduce antimicrobial resistance, help stop the spread of superbugs, and protect patients from side effects from antibiotics. During U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week and beyond, CDC promotes *Be Antibiotics Aware*, an educational effort to raise awareness about the importance of safe antibiotic use.

The *Be Antibiotics Aware* initiative educates the public about when antibiotics are needed, when they are not, how to take antibiotics appropriately, and potential side effects of antibiotics.

CDC encourages patients and families to:

- Get the facts about antibiotics. Antibiotics do NOT work on viruses, such as those that cause colds, flu, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), or COVID-19. When antibiotics aren't needed, they won't help you, and the side effects could still cause harm.
- Ask your healthcare professional about the most appropriate treatment for you or your loved ones' illness. If antibiotics are not needed, ask about the best way to feel better while your body fights off the virus.
- If you need antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed. Talk with your healthcare professional if you have any questions about your antibiotics.
- Talk with your healthcare professional if you develop any side effects, especially severe diarrhea, which could be *Clostridioides difficile* (or *C. diff*) infection, a condition that requires immediate treatment.
- Do your best to stay healthy and keep others healthy:
  - Clean your hands by washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
  - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue.
  - Stay at home when sick.
  - Avoid touching your face.
  - Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
  - Get recommended vaccines, such as the flu and COVID-19 vaccines.
  - If you need antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed.

CDC encourages patients and families to use the educational resources and learn more about *Be Antibiotics Aware* by visiting: <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/index.html>.