The ABCs of Prescribing Antibiotics

for Healthcare Professionals

Infection Prevention and You

Learn more about antibiotic resistance at **apic.org/infectionpreventionandyou** and **cdc.gov/antibiotic-use.**

Ask Yourself

"Are these antibiotics necessary?"

"What alternatives can we offer?"

Bacteria

Antibiotics do not kill viruses, they kill bacteria. When possible, get a culture to determine if antibiotics will be effective.

Conserve

Conserve the antibiotics we have by only prescribing when appropriate, and for the shortest duration possible. Consult your facility's antibiogram for selection of appropriate antibiotics. Make sure your patients complete their course if you prescribe an antibiotic.

Don't give in to pressure

Don't let patients pressure you into prescribing unnecessary antibiotics.

Do select the appropriate antibiotic, which could mean changing the medication based on the antibiogram.

Educate

Educate your patients on WHY antibiotics are not needed for:

- ✘ Colds or flu;
- ✘ Most coughs and bronchitis;
- ✘ Sore throats not caused by strep;
- ✘ Runny noses; or
- ✘ Most ear aches.

Using antibiotics the wrong way can cause bacteria to grow into superbugs. This could make your next infection much harder to treat.

APIC Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Infection Prevention and You

What you should know about antibiotic resistance.

Learn more about antibiotic resistance at **apic.org/infectionpreventionandyou** and **cdc.gov/antibiotic-use.**

APIC
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Did you know?

Antibiotic use is the most important factor leading to antibiotic resistance worldwide. Antibiotics are one of the most commonly prescribed drugs, and are often prescribed inappropriately. Each year in the United States, at least 2 million people get serious infections with bacteria that are resistant to one or more of the antibiotics designed to treat those infections. At least 23,000 people die each year as a direct result of these antibiotic-resistant infections.[1] This is why healthcare providers must use caution when prescribing antibiotics.

How can I help prevent antibiotic resistance?

- ✓ Take action to prevent the spread of resistant organisms.
- ✓ Report resistant organisms as requested by your facility or state health departments.
- ✓ Prescribe carefully—improve your facility's use of antibiotics:
  - ➤ Include dose, duration, and indication on antibiotic orders.
  - ➤ Get cultures before initiating antibiotic therapy.
  - ➤ Reassess need for antibiotics after 48-72 hours.
  - ➤ Prescribe the shortest course possible.

Top 5 topics on which to educate your patients regarding antibiotics:

1. Why antibiotics aren't effective for viral infections.
2. Why waiting for culture/test results may be necessary.
3. Why it is important to complete a course of antibiotics.
4. What type of infection they have and why the medication is necessary.
5. What side effects to look for and report.

1 The CDC, Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States, 2013.