

CAREFUL ANTIBIOTIC USE

Make promoting appropriate antibiotic use part of your routine clinical practice

PRACTICE TIPS

When parents ask for antibiotics to treat viral infections:

■ **Explain that unnecessary antibiotics can be harmful.**

Tell parents that based on the latest evidence, unnecessary antibiotics CAN be harmful, by promoting resistant organisms in their child and the community.

■ **Share the facts.**

Explain that bacterial infections can be cured by antibiotics, but viral infections never are.

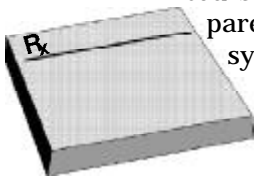
Explain that treating viral infections with antibiotics to prevent bacterial infections does not work.

■ **Build cooperation and trust.**

Convey a sense of partnership and don't dismiss the illness as "only a viral infection".

■ **Encourage active management of the illness.**

Explicitly plan treatment of symptoms with parents. Describe the expected normal time course of the illness and tell parents to come back if the symptoms persist or worsen.



■ **Be confident with the recommendation to use alternative treatments.**

Prescribe analgesics and decongestants, if appropriate.

Emphasize the importance of adequate nutrition and hydration.

Consider providing "care packages" with non-antibiotic therapies.

Create an office environment to promote the reduction in antibiotic use.

■ **Talk about antibiotic use at 4 and 12 month well child visits.**



The AAP Guidelines for Health Supervision III (1997) now include counseling on antibiotic use as an integral part of well-child care.

■ **Start the educational process in the waiting room.**

Videotapes, posters, and other materials are available.

(www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/antibioticresistance)

■ **Involve office personnel in the educational process.**

Reinforcement of provider messages by office staff can be a powerful adjunct to change patient attitudes.

■ **Use the CDC/AAP pamphlets and principles to support your treatment decisions.**

Provide information to help parents understand when the risks of using antibiotics outweigh the benefits.