

Health & Safety Tip #4

Using Antibiotics Wisely

Avoiding illness through cold and flu season can be a challenge. Getting adequate rest and drinking plenty of fluids will help, as well as the inclusion of over the counter remedies. Using antibiotics when they are not needed can lead to antibiotic resistance. Be patient if you have cold or flu symptoms, a cough or a sore throat. Most viral illnesses take 4-5 days before getting better and up to 3-weeks for full recovery.

Use Antibiotics Wisely:

- Although both bacteria and viruses cause respiratory tract infections, antibiotics only work against bacteria.
- Viral infections include colds, flu, croup, laryngitis, chest colds (bronchitis) and most sore throats.
- Viral infections are more contagious. If more than one family member has the same illness, odds are it is a viral infection.
- Bacteria are single-celled microorganisms that thrive in many different types of environments. Most bacteria cause no harm to people.
- Bacterial infections include strep throat, tuberculosis, pneumonia, strep throat and urinary tract infections.
- Bacterial infections are less common and do not spread from one person to another as readily.

Did you know 80% of common infections are spread by hands? Handwashing is the best way to stop the spread of infections. Whenever possible, use regular soap and alcohol based hand sanitizers. Antibacterial products can promote bacterial resistance.

Proper handwashing technique includes:

1. 15 seconds of vigorous rubbing until soapy lather appears.
2. Scrub between the fingers, under the fingernails, around the tops and palms of the hands.
3. Rinse under warm running water.
4. Dry the hands with a clean, disposable towel, and turn off the faucet using a towel as a barrier.

