

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.

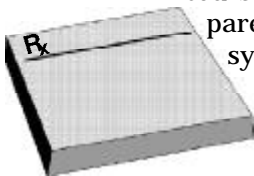
Explain that treating viral infections with antibiotics to prevent bacterial infections does not work.

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.