

# **Antibiotic Stewardship 2021**



**Commercial Quality  
Improvement**

# Antibiotic Stewardship

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HEDIS® is a registered trademark of the National Committee for Quality Assurance (NCQA). See [www.ncqa.org](http://www.ncqa.org).

# Antibiotic Stewardship: Introduction

## CDC Recommendations 2020

Antibiotic resistance is one of the most serious public health problems in the United States. To protect our patients from harm and combat antibiotic resistance we must:

- **Optimize how we use and prescribe antibiotics**
- **Use educational tools to inform patients**
- **Practice vigilant stewardship of antibiotic administration**



# Antibiotic Stewardship: Introduction

## CDC Recommendations 2020

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### Messages for Health Care Professionals

Follow clinical guidelines on whether to prescribe antibiotics, and when prescribing antibiotics, prescribe the right antibiotic at the right dose for the right duration at the right time.

- + Shortening the duration of antibiotic therapy to the minimum effective duration is a key antibiotic stewardship strategy in all settings of health care. The goal is to maximize the benefit to the patient by curing the infection while at the same time minimizing the risks of antibiotic resistance and side effects from antibiotics.
- + Protect your patients. Only prescribe antibiotics when they are needed. You can do harm by prescribing antibiotics that aren't needed.
- + Tell your patients why they don't need antibiotics for a viral infection, what to do to feel better, and when to seek care again if they don't feel better.
- + Talk to your patients and their families about possible harms from antibiotics, such as allergic reactions, *C. difficile*, and antibiotic-resistant infections.
- + Educate your patients and their families so they can recognize the signs and symptoms of sepsis and know when to seek medical care for possible sepsis.
- + Perform hand hygiene and follow infection prevention measures with every patient.

- <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/week/toolkit.html>

# Antibiotic Stewardship: HEDIS Update

- + Antibiotic Treatment for Acute Bronchitis/Bronchiolitis (AAB) The percentage of episodes\* for members ages **3 months of age and older** with a diagnosis of acute bronchitis/ bronchiolitis that **did not** result in an antibiotic dispensing event.
- + Appropriate Treatment for Upper Respiratory Infection (URI) - The percentage of episodes\* for members **3 months of age and older** with a diagnosis of upper respiratory infection (URI) that **did not** result in an antibiotic dispensing event.

\*Note that patients may have **multiple** episodes. The intake period is a 12-month window that begins on July 1 of the year prior to the measurement year and ends on June 30 of the measurement year. The Intake Period captures eligible episodes of treatment.

\*\*Sample diagnosis that exclude patients from the denominator include:

- Tonsillitis
- Otitis Media
- Sinusitis
- Pharyngitis



# Antibiotic Stewardship: Think Honey

During cold and flu season, patients often ask for an antibiotic to ease their symptoms. As you know, antibiotics are only effective in treating bacterial conditions and aren't helpful if patients have a cold, the flu or a viral upper respiratory tract infection.

This year, when offering alternative treatments to patients, consider adding another remedy to your usual advice of bed rest, fluids and over-the-counter medications. [Recent research published in BMJ Evidence-Based Medicine](#) found that honey may be a useful alternative in treating upper respiratory tract infections.

To evaluate the effectiveness of this kitchen-pantry staple, researchers performed a systematic review and meta-analysis of 14 previously published, randomized trials. The various studies compared honey to placebos and usual-care remedies, including diphenhydramine and dextromethorphan.

The researchers found that honey outperformed other treatments in many cases and helped to improve cough severity and frequency. More study is needed, but conclusions point to honey as a cheap, widely available, and effective remedy for adults and children over age 1.

**\*\*Please note the American Academy of Pediatrics doesn't recommend giving honey to children younger than age 1 because of the risk of infant botulism.**



# Provider Resources

## What's available to help?

Newsletter articles include important information, like quality care updates and best practice tips for:

- Quality care
- Updated coding
- Appropriate Usage



# Provider Resources

## CDC Resources

### What Is Watchful Waiting?



#### WAIT. DO NOT FILL YOUR PRESCRIPTION JUST YET.

Your healthcare professional believes your illness may go away on its own.

You should watch and wait for \_\_\_\_\_ days/hours before deciding whether to take an antibiotic.

In the meantime, follow your healthcare professional's recommendations to help you feel better and continue to monitor your own symptoms over the next few days.

- ☐ Rest.
- ☐ Drink extra water and fluids.
- ☐ Use a cool mist vaporizer or saline nasal spray to relieve congestion.
- ☐ For sore throats in adults and older children, try ice chips, sore throat spray, or lozenges.
- ☐ Use honey to relieve cough. Do not give honey to an infant younger than 1.

If you **feel better, no further action is necessary. You don't need antibiotics.**

If you do not feel better, experience new symptoms, or have other concerns, call your healthcare professional \_\_\_\_\_. Discuss whether you need a recheck or antibiotics.

It may not be convenient to visit your healthcare professional multiple times, but it is critical to take antibiotics only when needed. When antibiotics aren't needed, they won't help you and the side effects could still hurt you. Common side effects of antibiotics can include rash, dizziness, nausea, diarrhea, and yeast infections.

Antibiotics save lives, and when a patient needs antibiotics, the benefits outweigh the risks of side effects. You can protect yourself and others by learning when antibiotics are and are not needed.

To learn more about antibiotic prescribing and use, visit [www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use](http://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use).



### DO YOU NEED ANTIBIOTICS?



You feel sick and miserable and want to get better fast. It could be a cold or even the flu. You're probably thinking you need antibiotics to knock out your illness and help you feel better. **Not so fast!** When antibiotics aren't needed, they won't help you, and the side effects could still hurt you.

#### 8 WAYS TO BE ANTIBIOTICS AWARE

**1** Antibiotics save lives, but they aren't always the answer when you're sick.

**2** Antibiotics do not work on viruses.

**3** Antibiotics are only needed for treating certain infections caused by bacteria.

**4** An antibiotic will NOT make you feel better if you have a virus.

**5** Any time antibiotics are used, they can cause side effects.

**6** Taking antibiotics creates resistant bacteria.

**7** If you need antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed.

**8** Stay healthy: clean hands, cover coughs, and get vaccinated, for the flu, for example.

Talk to your healthcare professional about the best way to feel better.

To learn more about antibiotic prescribing and use, visit [www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use](http://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use).





# Provider Resources

## CDC Resources

The CDC offers a variety of tools for providers online:



**U.S. ANTIBIOTIC  
AWARENESS WEEK**  
November 18–24, 2020  
[www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use](http://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use)

- Find your Provider Tool Kit at: <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/week/toolkit.html>
  - Education for patients
  - Posters
  - Videos
  - Social Media Messages



# Antibiotic Stewardship: Additional Information

For additional information, contact your BlueCross Commercial Quality Improvement Team:

***Partners in the Pursuit of Health***



# Your Commercial Quality Improvement Team

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