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OVER 50 YEARS OF TRUST

Sniffle or Sneeze? No Antibiotics Please

CDC advises parents about colds, flu and antibiotics.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has news for parents this cold and flu season: antibiotics don't work for a cold or the flu.

Antibiotics kill bacteria, not viruses. And colds, flu and most sore throats are caused by viruses—never have, never will. And it's not really news. It's a long-documented medical fact.

But tell that to parents seeking relief for a child's runny nose. Research shows that most Americans have either missed the message about appropriate antibiotic use or they simply don't believe it. It's a case of mistaken popular belief winning out over fact. According to public opinion research, there is a perception that "antibiotics cure everything."

Americans believe in the power of antibiotics so much that many patients go to the doctor expecting to get a prescription.

And they do. Why? Physicians often are too pressured for time to engage in lengthy explanations of why antibiotics won't work. And, when the diagnosis is uncertain—as many symptoms for viral and bacterial infections are similar—doctors are more likely to yield to patient demands for antibiotics.

Risk of antibiotic resistance

The problem is, taking antibiotics when they are not needed can do more harm than good. Widespread inappropriate use of antibiotics is fueling an increase in drug-resistant bacteria. And sick individuals aren't the only people who can suffer the consequences. Families and entire communities feel the impact when disease-causing germs become resistant to antibiotics. The most obvious consequence of inappropriate antibiotic use is its effect on the sick patient. When antibiotics are incorrectly used to treat children or adults with viral infections, such as colds and flu, they aren't getting

the best care for their condition. A course of antibiotics won't fight the virus, make the patient feel better, yield a quicker recovery or keep others from getting sick. A less obvious antibiotic overuse is the boost it gives to drug-resistant disease-causing bacteria. Almost every type of bacteria has become stronger and less responsive to antibiotic treatment when it really is needed. These antibiotic-resistant bacteria can quickly spread to family members, school mates and co-workers—threatening the community with a new strain of infectious disease that is more difficult to cure and more expensive to treat.

According to the CDC, antibiotic resistance is one of the world's most pressing public health problems. Americans of all ages can lower this risk by talking to their doctors and using antibiotics appropriately during this cold and flu season.

Courtesy of: www.cdc.gov/getsmart.

Bellevue Drug is an authorized Medicare Provider and can dispense Diabetic Testing Supplies, and other Part B covered products. We will bill Medicare Part B and Supplemental (Secondary) Insurance, too. If you have questions or need help, please call Bellevue Drug at (609) 561-0825, x209.

Medicare Part D: Updates, Reminders & Alerts

Enrollment Reminders—

- All Medicare Beneficiaries can enroll in or change current plan each year during the Annual Open Enrollment: Nov. 15th—Dec. 31st each year.
- If you have an SPAP (State Pharmacy Assistance Program), i.e.: NJ PAAD or NJ Senior Gold, you may make a ONE TIME annual plan change during each calendar

year, outside of the Annual Open Enrollment Period.

- Late Enrollment Penalty—you may be subject to a 1% assessment on your Part D Premium for each month you were not enrolled in a Medicare Part D plan and did not have creditable coverage with another insurer.
- Proof of Creditable Coverage—keep your copy in a safe place. You may be re-

quired to send a copy to a new insurer, if you decide to change plans. Each new insurer must confirm that you had prior coverage.

- Annual Open Enrollment—our staff can help you review your current plan with the 2009 plans. Comparing your Part D Plan each year may help you save on your prescription expenses. Call (609) 561-0825, x208.

Medicare Beneficiaries—Beware of Scams

Protect your personal information—

- Never give your bank account information, Medicare ID#, or Social Security number over the phone—unless you initiated the phone call.
- Review mail you receive from insurance companies carefully. Be sure that the

insurance card you receive in the mail is from the plan you are enrolled in or wish to be enrolled in. Many insurers send out new cards that request you to call and activate, which may switch you to an entirely different plan than the one you are already enrolled.

- According to the Medicare

Handbook, no one should call you or come to your home—uninvited—selling Medicare-covered products. Don't give your personal information to someone who does this. Call the NJ State Health Insurance Hotline: 1-800-792-8820, if you have questions about your health insurance.

CFC-Propelled Albuterol Inhalers being phased out Dec. 31.

The FDA is phasing out albuterol inhalers using CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons). After Dec. 31, 2008, albuterol inhalers will contain an HFA-propellant (hydrofluoralkane). CFCs and HFAs are the propellants that move the albuterol medicine out of the inhaler, so the patient can breathe the medicine into their

lungs. CFCs have been found to have negative effects on your health, as well as, being harmful to our environment. Albuterol HFA inhalers are used the same way as albuterol CFC inhalers and give the same dose of albuterol. There are, however, some differences between the 2 types: including how the HFA

inhaler tastes, and the force of the spray may feel softer. Usage & Cleaning methods will differ, too. We urge you to talk with our pharmacists about using the HFA inhalers. We also have additional information in our pharmacy regarding the transition. Please ask our staff for assistance.