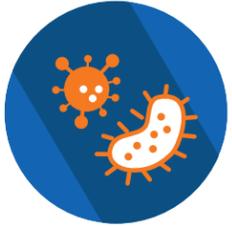




# 5 WAYS COMMUNITY PHARMACISTS CAN BE ANTIBIOTICS AWARE



## 1. Educate patients about viral versus bacterial causes of acute respiratory infections (ARI)

- Review that antibiotics do not work on viruses, such as those that cause colds, flu, or COVID-19.<sup>1</sup>
- Explain antibiotics may not be needed for some common bacterial infections, including many sinus infections and some ear infections.



## 2. Recommend strategies for ARI symptom relief

- Provide education on supportive care measures for ARI symptoms, which can help patients feel better and may increase adherence to delayed antibiotic prescribing approaches when used.<sup>2</sup>
- Discuss specific over-the-counter and non-pharmacological therapy for symptom relief based upon age and underlying health conditions.



## 3. Verify penicillin allergy

- When possible, obtain and document a more detailed history of the penicillin reaction and previously prescribed beta-lactam antibiotics.<sup>3</sup>
- Advise patients, when applicable, to seek allergy assessment by their primary care provider or allergist to determine if they may be able to tolerate a beta-lactam antibiotic.



## 4. Raise awareness of the risks of antibiotic use

- Alert patients about possible harms from antibiotics including allergic reactions, *Clostridioides difficile* infections and antibiotic-resistant infections.<sup>4</sup>
- Remind patients not to save antibiotics for later, share them with others, or take antibiotics prescribed for someone else.



## 5. Assess immunization status

- Recommend routine or indication-specific vaccines based on guidance by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).<sup>5</sup>
- Administer recommended vaccines when possible (and permitted) or refer to other vaccine providers.

*This document is meant to provide general guidance and does not apply to all clinical scenarios. Always assess the individual patient, use your clinical judgment, and follow your organization's protocols when applicable.*



### References:

1. CDC's "Viruses or Bacteria: What's got you sick?" Chart <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/pdfs/VirusOrBacteria-Original-P.pdf>.
2. CDC's "Relief for Common Symptoms of Colds and Cough" Prescription Pad <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/pdfs/HCP-Relief-Colds-Cough-85x11-P.pdf>.
3. CDC's "Is It Really a Penicillin Allergy?" Fact Sheet <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/community/pdfs/penicillin-factsheet.pdf>.
4. CDC's "Taking Your Antibiotics" Prescription Pad <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/pdfs/RCx-Taking-Your-Antibiotics-45x55-P.pdf>.
5. CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/recommendations.html>.

