

Healthcare providers - The power to prevent antibiotic resistance is in your hands.

Get Smart About Antibiotics Week

Tuesday, November 16, 2010



Did you know?

1. Antibiotic resistance is one of the world's most pressing public health threats.
2. Antibiotics are the most important tool we have to combat life-threatening bacterial diseases.
3. Increased antibiotic resistance is compromising the effectiveness of antibiotics.
4. Patients, healthcare providers, hospital administrators, and policy makers must work together to employ effective strategies for improving appropriate antibiotic use – ultimately saving lives.

Scope of the Problem

- Infections with resistant bacteria have become more common in healthcare and community settings, and many bacteria have become resistant to more than one type or class of antibiotic.
- As resistance increases, the patient's risk of complications or death from infection also increases.

Antibiotic resistance is associated with:

- *Increased risk of hospitalization*
- *Increased length of stay*
- *Increased hospital costs*
- *Increased risk of ICU transfer*
- *Increased mortality*

Inpatient Settings

- Antimicrobial resistance adversely impacts the health of millions of hospitalized patients every year.
- One in every three patients will receive two or more antibiotics in the course of their hospital stay.
- Of the patients receiving antibiotics, three out of every four will receive unnecessary or redundant therapy, resulting in excessive use of antibiotics.
- Redundant therapy is considered a medication error.

Outpatient Settings

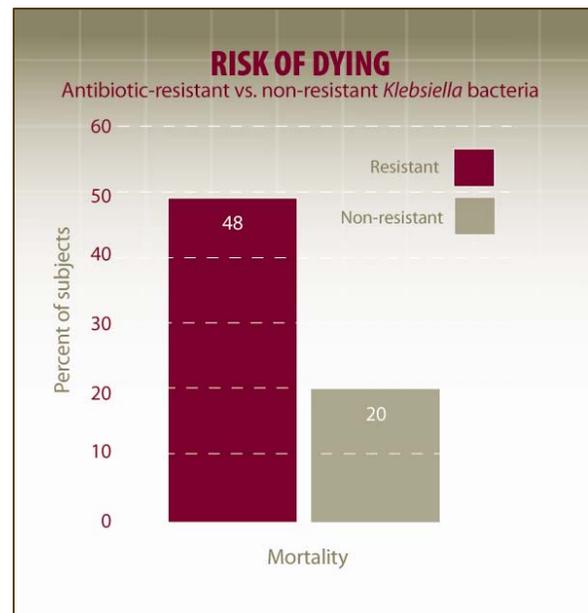
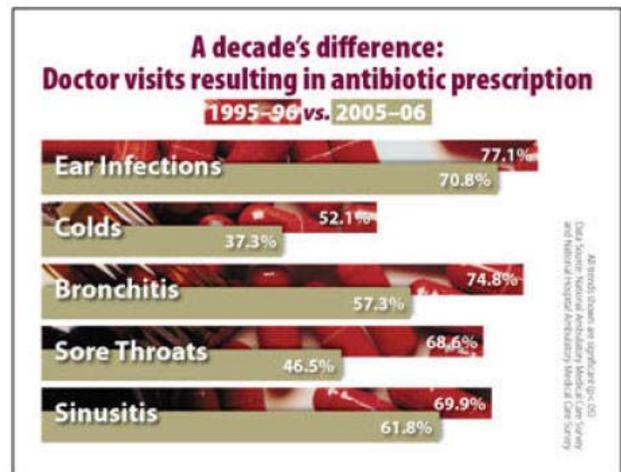
- Each year, tens of millions of antibiotics are prescribed unnecessarily for viral upper respiratory infections.
- Antibiotic use in primary care is associated with antibiotic resistance at the individual patient level.
- The presence of antibiotic-resistant bacteria is greatest during the month following a patient's antibiotic use and may persist for up to 1 year.

Why we must act now

- Antibiotics are a shared resource – and becoming a scarce resource.
- Appropriate use of existing antibiotics can limit the spread of antibiotic resistance, preserving antibiotics for the future.
- Antibiotic resistance is not just a problem for the person with the infection. Some resistant bacteria have the potential to spread to others – promoting antibiotic-resistant infections.

Healthcare providers can help

- Assess the use of antibiotics carefully and utilize them only when indicated to avoid promoting the development of resistance among bacteria.
- Prescribe the right antibiotic; be familiar with resistance trends in your region.
- Never treat viral syndromes with antibiotics, even when patients ask for them; ensure they are getting the best treatment for their condition.
- Reduce antibiotic prescriptions in outpatient settings – without adversely affecting patient health – by not prescribing antibiotics for viral upper respiratory infections. Patients report high satisfaction without antibiotic prescriptions if the doctor takes the time to explain why an antibiotic isn't needed.
- Talk to patients and parents to identify expectations. Studies show pediatricians overestimate the desire for an antibiotic prescription.
- Recommend specific symptomatic therapy (or other appropriate treatments) for viral upper respiratory infections.
- Work with pharmacists, another member of the healthcare team, to counsel patients on appropriate antibiotic use, antibiotic resistance, and adverse effects.
- Refine antibiotic choice once the pathogen causing the infection has been identified.
- Utilize patient and provider resources provided by professional organizations and CDC.
- Avoid unnecessary overlaps in antibiotic spectra. It is not usually necessary to give two antibiotics to treat the same bacteria.
- Reduce unnecessary antibiotic use to decrease resistance, *Clostridium difficile* infections, and costs, as well as improve patient outcomes.
- Make appropriate antibiotic use in hospitals and nursing homes a quality improvement program.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

For more information, please contact Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
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