

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Local Coalition Promotes Smart Antibiotic Use

Eau Claire, Wis. – November 21, 2019 – The Healthcare-Associated Infection (HAI) Coalition of Eau Claire County is observing National Antibiotic Week by urging everyone to become more antibiotic aware.



How can you become more antibiotic aware?

✓ **Know that antibiotics can be lifesaving for some illnesses, but they are not the answer for others!** Antibiotics only work against illnesses caused by bacteria such as strep throat and whooping cough. They **do not** work against viruses such as influenza or the common cold.

“If you take them when you don’t need them, they won’t make you feel better and the side effects could harm you,” states Allison Gosbin, Public Health Nurse.

Common Condition	Common Cause			Are Antibiotics Needed?
	Bacteria	Bacteria or Virus	Virus	
Strep throat	✓			Yes
Whooping cough	✓			Yes
Urinary tract infection	✓			Yes
Sinus infection		✓		Maybe
Middle ear infection		✓		Maybe
Bronchitis/chest cold (in otherwise healthy children and adults)*		✓		No*
Common cold/runny nose			✓	No
Sore throat (except strep)			✓	No
Flu			✓	No

* Studies show that in otherwise healthy children and adults, antibiotics for bronchitis won't help you feel better.

✓ **Listen to your healthcare provider’s guidance. Only they can determine which type of illness you have.**

“If you have a virus, your provider likely will not prescribe antibiotics,” says Dr. Janki Patel, Mayo Clinic Health System-Eau Claire. “Instead, they may recommend plenty of fluids and rest.” Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist about over-the-counter medications that can temporarily lessen your symptoms.

✓ **Take antibiotics only when you need them!** Taking antibiotics when you don’t need them can lead to antibiotic resistance. This means that bacteria get used to an antibiotic and the antibiotic no longer works. These antibiotic-resistant bacteria can make you very ill and spread to other people. Every year, more than 2.8 million infections occur from antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Deaths caused by these resistant bacteria increase every year.

“When bacteria become resistant, antibiotics cannot fight them and the bacteria multiply,” explains Jim Spielman, HSHS Sacred Heart Hospital pharmacy. “Some resistant bacteria can be difficult or nearly impossible to treat.”

For more information on appropriate use of antibiotics, see <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/community/for-patients/index.html>.

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