EVANS army COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

Pediatric Clinic
PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUTS

Antibiotic Resistance

Antibiotics, also known as antimicrobial drugs, are drugs that fight infections caused by bacteria. After their discovery in the 1940's they transformed medical care and dramatically reduced illness and death from infectious diseases. However, over the decades the bacteria that antibiotics control have developed resistance to these drugs. Today, virtually all important bacterial infections in the United States and throughout the world are becoming resistant. For this reason, antibiotic resistance is among the top concerns of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Antibiotic resistance can cause significant danger and suffering for children and adults who have common infections, once easily treatable with antibiotics.

Antibiotic resistance has been called one of the world's most pressing public health problems.

Antibiotic Resistance- what it is and how it happens:

Antibiotic use promotes development of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria change in some way that reduces or eliminates the effectiveness of drugs, chemicals, or other agents designed to cure or prevent infections. The bacteria survive and continue to multiply causing more harm. Widespread use of antibiotics promotes the spread of antibiotic resistance. While antibiotics should be used to treat bacterial infections, they are not effective against viral infections like the common cold, most sore throats, and the flu.

Antibiotics kill bacteria, not viruses

Smart use of antibiotics is the key to controlling the spread of resistance.

What does CDC recommend?

Only use antibiotics when they are likely to be beneficial.

By reading this handout, you are taking the first step to reducing your risk of getting antibiotic-resistant infections. It is important to understand that, although they are very useful drugs, antibiotics designed for bacterial infections are not useful for viral infections such as a cold, cough, or flu.

How can you prevent antibiotic-resistant infections?

- Talk with your health care provider about antibiotic resistance.
  - Ask whether an antibiotic is likely to be beneficial for your illness.
  - Ask what else you can do to feel better sooner.
- Do not take an antibiotic for a viral infection like a cold or the flu.
- Do not save some of your antibiotic for the next time you get sick.
- Take an antibiotic exactly as the doctor tells you.
- Do not take an antibiotic that is prescribed for someone else.

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