



News Release

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The right prescription to combat antibiotic resistance

OLYMPIA -- The Washington State Department of Health is launching a partnership to combat antibiotic resistant bacteria and urges everyone — the public, prescribers, and food producers — to use antibiotics wisely to prevent antibiotic resistance. Overuse of antibiotics is the main factor contributing to this problem.

A group of 18 Washington health care organizations and state agencies wrote [a call to action](#) that alerts everyone to the dangers of antibiotic resistance and the need to prevent unnecessary antibiotic use. “We need to use these lifesaving drugs wisely to prolong their usefulness,” said State Health Officer Dr. Kathy Lofy.

One-third to one-half of antibiotics used in people are unnecessary or inappropriate, and contribute to [antibiotic resistance](#). Taking antibiotics when they aren’t needed increases antibiotic-resistant infections and puts patients at unnecessary risk of other bad drug reactions. We can do better!

Consumers need to know that viral infections, the cause of most colds and coughs, don’t respond to antibiotics. Health care prescribers should follow current practice guidelines for determining antibiotic treatments to achieve the best outcomes for patients, and recognize when antibiotics aren’t needed. Food producers should aim to reduce antibiotic use in animal agriculture — such as avoiding antibiotic use for promoting growth, and not using antibiotics that are essential for treating disease in humans. Preserving the effectiveness of antibiotic drugs is vital to protecting human and animal health.

November 16-22 is Get Smart Week, to raise awareness of the threat of antibiotic resistance and the importance of appropriate antibiotic prescribing and use. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimate about 2 million infections and 23,000 deaths are due to antibiotic resistant infections each year in the United States.

— More —

Combating antibiotic resistance

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This year's observance of Get Smart about Antibiotics marks the first World Antibiotic Awareness Week which coincides with other similar observances across the world. The CDC has more information about [Get Smart: Know When Antibiotics Work](#).

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