

August 2024

Federal Employee Program Antibiotic Awareness for Acute Bronchitis/Bronchiolitis

Antibiotic resistance is a major health concern in the United States, with 2.8 million antibiotic-resistant infections, and at least 47 million unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions written per year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is urging health care professionals to help fight antibiotic resistance by prescribing antibiotics only when it is medically necessary.

At Florida Blue, we are committed to providing your patients, our members, with quality care and educational resources to help them make informed health decisions. As part of this effort, last month we emailed our Federal Employee Program® (FEP) members or their guardians, ages 3 months and above, information on the topic of antibiotic resistance awareness.

Antibiotics and Treating Acute Bronchitis/Bronchiolitis

As a health care provider, you play a critical role in appropriately managing acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis and preventing the overuse and misuse of antibiotics. Here are some key points to keep in mind when caring for patients, especially those diagnosed with acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis:

- Antibiotics are not effective against viral infections, which account for many acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis cases. **Only prescribe antibiotics when medically needed.**
- Antibiotics may be necessary in cases where the infection is severe, or if the patient has a history of respiratory problems or other underlying health conditions, e.g., COPD.
- In mild cases of acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis, symptom relief measures such as rest, hydration, and over-the-counter medications may be sufficient.
- It is important to educate patients on the appropriate use of antibiotics, what to do to feel better, when to seek care again if symptoms persist, and the risks of antibiotic resistance.
- Vaccines, such as the flu vaccine, can help prevent respiratory infections and reduce the risk of complications.
- Be aware of local antibiotic resistance patterns and use this information to guide your treatment decisions.

By following these guidelines and using evidence-based practices, you can help ensure antibiotics are used appropriately and effectively in the treatment of acute bronchitis/bronchiolitis.

How We Can Help

We recognize you are a busy professional, and we aim to serve as a valuable resource for you, providing efficient and effective solutions that support your work and enhance patient care. If your patients require additional resources, they can access our [24/7 Nurse Line at 1-888-258-3432](#).

Access the CDC Toolkit, Continuing Education, and More

Be sure to visit the CDC website page for details on [Antibiotic Use and Prescribing](#) and the [Be Antibiotics Aware](#) initiative to find educational materials available to health care professionals in outpatient and inpatient settings. The site also includes [patient and provider](#) handout materials.

Additionally, the CDC is offering [free continuing education \(CE\)](#) for health care professionals regarding judicious antibiotic prescribing and antibiotic resistance. Be sure to take advantage of this opportunity.