

November 2022

Federal Employee Program Antibiotic Awareness Week (November 18-24, 2022)

For one week in November, health care organizations and providers are asked to help raise awareness on the appropriate use of antibiotics and reduce the threat of antibiotic resistance.

Be Antibiotics Aware

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is urging health care professionals to prescribe antibiotics only when medically necessary to help fight antibiotic resistance. According to the CDC, at least 47 million unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions are written each year.

During U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week and throughout the year, the CDC promotes Be Antibiotics Aware, an educational effort to raise awareness on the importance of safe antibiotic prescribing and use. Many educational resources, including a partner toolkit, are available to help providers promote this event, which encourages health care professionals to:

- Protect patients. Only prescribe antibiotics when medically needed.
- Follow clinical guidelines when prescribing antibiotics, ensuring the appropriate dose is prescribed at the right time.
- Reduce antibiotic therapy to the minimum effective duration – a key antibiotic stewardship strategy in all settings of health care. The goal is to maximize the benefit to the patient by curing the infection, while minimizing the risks of side effects and antibiotic resistance.
- Educate patients on why they do not need antibiotics for a viral infection such as acute bronchitis, what to do to feel better, and when to seek care again if they do not start feeling better.
- Talk to patients and their families about possible harms from antibiotics, such as allergic reactions, opportunistic pathogens such as *C. difficile* and antibiotic-resistant infections.
- As always, follow hand-hygiene and infection-prevention measures with every patient.

Access the CDC Toolkit, Continuing Education, and More

Be sure to visit the CDC website page for details on the [U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week](#) 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 over [10 hours of free continuing education \(CE\)](#) for health care professionals regarding judicious antibiotic prescribing and antibiotic resistance. Be sure to take advantage of this educational opportunity.