

August 2019

Hot Tip: The Impact of Antibiotics Overuse and Influenza and Pneumonia Vaccination on Respiratory Infections

Winter is coming, and influenza (flu) season is upon us. Simply Healthcare Plans, Inc. and Clear Health Alliance would like to remind you to consider the appropriate use of antibiotics. Please discuss options and adverse reactions with your patients when they present with viral infections.

What is antibiotic overuse?

Antibiotic overuse occurs when antibiotics are used to treat colds and other viral illnesses. Antibiotics do not stop the infection and often create unwanted side effects.

What are the consequences of overuse?

If individuals take an antibiotic when they actually have a viral infection, the antibiotic still attacks bacteria in their body — including beneficial bacteria and bacteria not causing disease. This misdirected treatment can promote antibiotic-resistant properties in harmless bacteria that can be shared with other bacteria. As a result, individuals become at greater risk for drug-resistant bacteria, and common antibiotics cannot be used; therefore, ridding patients of infection requires stronger forms of therapy.

Common viral infections that do not benefit from antibiotic treatment include:

- Cold.
- Flu.
- Bronchitis.
- Most coughs.
- Most sore throats.
- Some ear infections.
- Some sinus infections.
- Stomach flu (viral gastroenteritis).

How can PCPs help?

PCPs have a unique opportunity to lead care for members, including recommending flu and pneumonia vaccinations, emphasizing the importance of good hygiene and hand washing, and guiding symptomatic treatment.

If you have questions, please call Provider Services at **1-844-405-4296**.