

[NAME OF EDITORIAL PAGE EDITOR]
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR
[NAME OF PUBLICATION]
[STREET ADDRESS]
[CITY], [STATE], [ZIP CODE]

Dear Editor:

In response to [TITLE AND DATE OF PUBLISHED ARTICLE RELATING TO COLD AND FLU SEASON], I would like to call attention to another important issue the public should be aware of during this cold and flu season: the inappropriate widespread use of antibiotics. This problem is so urgent, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has launched a massive national education campaign, *Get Smart: Know When Antibiotics Work*. This effort aims to inform consumers that antibiotics do not effectively treat viral infections, such as a cold or the flu. Antibiotics only kill bacteria — this is a long-documented medical fact.

However, most Americans have either missed the message about appropriate antibiotic use or they simply don't believe it. According to recent public opinion research, many consumers believe that antibiotics "cure everything." This perception is false.

Taking antibiotics when they are not needed potentially does more harm than good. Antibiotic treatment won't fight viral infection, make the patient feel better, yield a quicker recovery or keep others from getting sick. But inappropriate use will contribute to antibiotic resistance.

According to the CDC, antibiotic resistance is the one of the world's most pressing public health problems. Over the last decade, almost every type of bacteria has become stronger and less responsive to antibiotic treatment when it really is needed. These antibiotic-resistant bacteria can quickly spread through communities, threatening public health with a new strain of infectious disease that is more difficult to cure and more expensive to treat.

[HEALTH DEPARTMENT] is joining CDC's effort to alert the public to the risks of inappropriate antibiotic use. We urge [COMMUNITY] residents to consult with their doctors and learn when antibiotic treatment is warranted. For more information, visit [LOCAL OR CDC WEB SITE] or call [LOCAL OR CDC HOTLINE].

Sincerely,
[HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL]