

CONTACT: [NAME]
[TELEPHONE NUMBER]
[E-MAIL ADDRESS]

[STATE/COUNTY] Joins CDC to Spread the Message About Colds, Flu and Antibiotics

[CITY] [STATE] on [DATE] — [SPONSORING STATE HEALTH DEPARTMENT] is joining the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to help build awareness of the appropriate use of antibiotics. *Get Smart: Know When Antibiotics Work* is a national public education campaign, aiming to help Americans become better informed about antibiotic treatment, especially during the cold and flu season. State and county health departments across America are joining forces to promote the campaign throughout their local communities. The campaign's key message is a basic medical fact: antibiotics do not effectively treat colds, flu and other viral illnesses. Antibiotics do not kill viruses, make patients with viral infections feel better, yield a faster recovery or keep others from getting sick.

"Recent research tells us that most Americans don't understand that antibiotics kill bacteria, not viruses," said [NAME AND TITLE OF HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL]. "People go to the doctor expecting to get antibiotics for a sick child or themselves. Many times, a prescription for antibiotics is the wrong course of treatment."

Tens of millions of the antibiotics prescribed in doctor's offices are for viral infections that are not treatable with antibiotics. Doctors cite diagnostic uncertainty, time pressure and patient demand as the primary reasons for this over-prescription.

"Antibiotics are powerful drugs that can work wonders when you need them for bacterial infections," said [NAME OF HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL]. "But please don't insist on antibiotics when your doctor says you have a virus, such as a cold or the flu."

Taking antibiotics when they are not needed creates additional health risks. Patients with viral infections are not getting the best treatment for their condition. In addition, widespread inappropriate use of antibiotics is fueling an increase in drug-resistant bacteria that threaten widespread drug-resistant illness. Over the last decade, almost every type of bacteria has become stronger and less responsive to antibiotic treatment when it is needed. These antibiotic-resistant bacteria can quickly spread through a community, introducing a new strain of infectious disease that is more difficult to cure and more expensive to treat.

According to the CDC, antibiotic resistance is the one of the world's most pressing public health problems. Americans of all ages can lower this risk by learning about appropriate antibiotic use and taking antibiotics only when they are needed this cold and flu season.

[BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT THE STATE/COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND ITS ROLE IN PROMOTING THE CAMPAIGN]

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