

A Message to Parents About **Antibiotic Use in Our Practice**

Antibiotics are safe and effective medicines for treating bacterial infections. Recently, though, concern has been raised about antibiotic *overuse*, which causes some bacteria to become resistant to common antibiotics. Infection with antibiotic-resistant bacteria can be dangerously difficult to treat. Our best defense against this growing problem is to use antibiotics only when they are needed.

There are some steps we can take together to reduce the threat of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Here are a few points to remember.

What we will do:

- We *will* prescribe antibiotics for bacterial infections. We *will not* prescribe them when we believe your child has a viral illness. Antibiotics do not treat viruses. Viruses cause most colds, runny noses, and coughs in children. Your doctor or nurse knows how to recognize bacterial infections and viral infections.
- We *will not* prescribe an antibiotic without evaluating your child in person. Except in very rare cases, it is not possible to tell if a child has a bacterial infection over the telephone.
- If we do not prescribe an antibiotic, we will give you other suggestions for making your child feel better, and tell you how long we expect your child will be sick.
- If your child needs an antibiotic, we will use the most appropriate antibiotic for that illness. We'll choose an antibiotic that is effective and that has minimal impact on development of antibiotic resistance in your child and the community.
- We will give you additional information about appropriate antibiotic use.
- We will give you a Day Care/School Excuse form that explains why your child does not need an antibiotic to return to day care or school.

What you can do:

- Ask us whether your child's illness is caused by a bacteria or virus.
- When an antibiotic is prescribed, give it to your child exactly as directed and for the length of time specified. (Taking less than the prescribed number of doses of the antibiotic puts your child at risk of developing a bacteria-resistant infection.)
- Ask us what you can do to make your child feel better.
- Always call us if your child is developing additional symptoms, is not recovering as quickly as you expected, or appears more ill to you. We will always re-evaluate a child who is not doing well.
- Please don't ask us to prescribe antibiotics when they are not necessary, or over the phone.
- Please don't save antibiotics for future use.

Together, we can help reduce the threat of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. We look forward to working with you to keep antibiotics safe for our children and our community for years to come.