

# A Commitment to Our Patients about Antibiotics

*Antibiotics only fight infections caused by bacteria. Like all drugs, they can be harmful and should only be used when necessary. Taking antibiotics when you have a virus can do more harm than good: you will still feel sick and the antibiotic could give you a skin rash, diarrhea, a yeast infection, or worse.*

*Antibiotics also give bacteria a chance to become more resistant to them. This can make future infections harder to treat. It means that antibiotics might not work when you really do need them. Because of this, it is important that you only use an antibiotic when it is necessary to treat your illness.*

*How can you help? When you have a cough, sore throat, or other illness, tell your doctor you only want an antibiotic if it is really necessary. If you are not prescribed an antibiotic, ask what you can do to feel better and get relief from your symptoms.*

*Your health is important to us. As your healthcare providers, we promise to provide the best possible treatment for your condition. If an antibiotic is not needed, we will explain this to you and will offer a treatment plan that will help. We are **dedicated** to prescribing antibiotics **only** when they are needed, and we will avoid giving you antibiotics when they might do more harm than good.*

*If you have any questions, please feel free to ask us.*

*Sincerely,*



U.S. Department of  
Health and Human Services  
Centers for Disease  
Control and Prevention