

Campaign to encourage proper antibiotic use

Written by By NM Dept. of Health
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The New Mexico Department of Health is proud to join the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention in celebrating Nov. 14 - 20 as “Get Smart About Antibiotics Week”, an important campaign to increase awareness about the benefits and risks of antibiotics.

While deaths due to infections caused by bacteria have decreased dramatically since antibiotics became available in the 1940s, widespread use of antibiotics has led to bacteria that are resistant to antibiotic treatment. Antibiotic resistance is now one of the most pressing public health threats of modern times.

Although resistance to antibiotics can occur spontaneously in nature, the development of widespread antibiotic resistance is largely due to overuse and inappropriate use of antibiotics through healthcare and agricultural production. To combat antibiotic resistance and avoid adverse drug reactions, antibiotics must be used appropriately. This means only using the appropriate antibiotic for the proper clinical indication, at the correct dose and for the recommended duration of treatment.

“Antibiotics save lives. It is our collective responsibility to preserve them so they can be used effectively when they are truly necessary,” said Lynn Gallagher, Department of Health Secretary Designate. “The Department of Health is committed to working with the public and healthcare organizations to stop the spread of antimicrobial resistance and enhance wise use of antibiotics.”

As part of the National Action Plan for Combating Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria, NMDOH

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recently received funding to fight to stop antibiotic resistance by working with hospital and clinical laboratory partners to facilitate early detection of infectious diseases trends, prevent transmission of bacteria resistant to antibiotics, and implement strategies to improve prescribing practices by healthcare providers.

The CDC estimates that at least one-third of antibiotics prescribed in the United States – or 47 million prescriptions — are unnecessary. Over 23,000 deaths per year in the United States are attributable to bacteria resistant to antibiotics. Another 29,000 deaths may be related to complications related to antibiotic use.

Healthcare organizations and providers are urged to team up to become good antibiotic stewards and empower consumers to question if an antibiotic is necessary.

For additional information about the “Get Smart About Antibiotics” campaign and for resources on antibiotic stewardship and appropriate use for healthcare providers and patients, visit the CDC’s page on “Get Smart Programs & Observances.”

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