Be Antibiotic Aware

What are antibiotics?

- Antibiotics are medications that treat infections caused by bacteria (germs). Antibiotics kill both the bad and good bacteria in your body. Some common infections treated with antibiotics are:
    - › Urinary tract infections (UTIs)
    - › Pneumonia (lung infection)
    - › Strep throat
- **Antibiotics do not kill viruses**.

> **Do not take antibiotics for:**
> - › A cold
> - › The flu (influenza)
> - › Any infection caused by a virus

What are the possible side effects?

- › Rash
- › Dizziness
- › Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach)
- › Diarrhea (loose, watery poop)
- › Yeast infection
- › Antibiotic resistance (antibiotics may not work as well the next time you use them)

Serious side effects include:

- › *C. difficile* infection, which is a type of bacteria found in your intestine (gut or bowel) and stool (poop)
- › Serious or life-threatening allergic reaction

Talk with your health care provider if:

- › you have questions about your antibiotics.
- › you have side effects, especially diarrhea. This may be a sign of *C. difficile* infection. This can be serious.

What is antibiotic resistance?

- Antibiotic resistance is when bacteria get stronger after you use antibiotics. This means that antibiotics do not work as well to kill bacteria and treat infections.
- Antibiotic resistance happens when you use antibiotics for too long, especially when they are not needed.

> **Why should I care about antibiotic resistance?**
> - **You can be infected by antibiotic-resistant bacteria even if you do not use antibiotics**.
> - 15 Canadians die each day from antibiotic-resistant bacteria.
> - Antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats to world health. If some bacteria get too strong, we may not be able to fight them.
> - You may need antibiotics in the future to prevent or treat an infection (like during surgery).

What can I do to fight antibiotic resistance?

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands often.
- Cough into your elbow instead of your hand. This helps to avoid spreading germs. If you do cough into your hand, wash your hands as soon as you can.
- Get vaccinated. Ask your primary health care provider (family doctor or nurse practitioner) about your vaccines.
- **Do not take antibiotics if you do not need them**. Talk to your health care provider before taking antibiotics.

> **Antibiotics are an important resource we must protect**.
> **Thank you for doing your part to fight antibiotic resistance.**

The information in this pamphlet is for informational and educational purposes only. The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.