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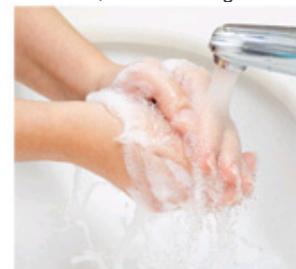
## Tips to Reduce Antibiotic Use

Antibiotics are one of America's most powerful weapons in keeping Americans healthy; however the health care community recognizes that overuse of antibiotics is reducing their effectiveness and causing a public health threat.

Overuse not only perpetuates antibiotic resistance, but also exposes patients to adverse drug events. Appropriate prescribing practices and educating patients can curb the excessive use of antibiotics. Effective communication is more important than an antibiotic for patient satisfaction.

Tips to help educate your patients:

- Tell patients that antibiotic use increases the risk of an antibiotic-resistant infection.
- Identify and validate patient concerns. Spend time answering questions and offer a contingency plan if symptoms worsen.
- Recommend specific symptomatic therapy such as fluids, throat lozenges or cool-mist vaporizer.
- Provide patient education materials on antibiotic resistance. The [CDC](#) offers additional tips and patient education materials.
- Encourage your patients and staff to wash their hands properly and often. This will reduce the chance of spreading infection, which helps reduce the need for antibiotics.



Please remember that your patients demanding antibiotics from you will not help them unless *you* determine that antibiotics are the best course of treatment. Also remind your patients to take antibiotics exactly as prescribed and complete the full course of treatment. Patients should not hoard pills for later use or share them with others.

Please consult our Clinical Practice Guidelines on [antibiotic resistance](#) for additional information. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) and the [Alliance for the Prudent Use of Antibiotics](#) also have useful information.