

## We need to work together

- Antibiotic resistance is a very complicated problem.
- Both healthcare consumers and healthcare providers need to understand that antibiotics can cause side effects.
- Healthcare providers can help by not prescribing antibiotics for infections caused by viruses and by educating parents about other things they can do to help their child feel better.
- Parents can help by asking their child's healthcare provider the following questions:
  - What kind of germ is causing my child's infection?
  - Is an antibiotic really necessary?
  - Is there something else I can do to help my child feel better?
  - Are there any "warning signs" that I should look for to bring my child back to see her healthcare provider?
- If the child's condition requires an antibiotic, childcare workers can help the child complete the antibiotic as prescribed.
- Parents should not return their child to her childcare group or school until she is eating and playing well and has no fever for 24 hours.

If everyone works together, the development of antibiotic resistance can be slowed or reversed.

## Resources List:

1. *The ABCs of Safe and Healthy Child Care* published by the CDC is available online on the Internet at <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/hip/abc/abc.htm>  
A hardbound copy can be ordered by mail for \$19.00 plus shipping: Order number PB97-104723 from the National Technical Information Service:  
NTIS  
5285 Port Royal Road  
Springfield, VA 22161  
To order by phone with a credit card:  
1-800-553-NTIS
2. *Healthy Young Children: A Manual for Programs*, 1995 edition, cost \$15.00 and may be ordered from the National Association for the Education of Young Children at 1-800-424-2460
3. *Model Child Care Health Policies*, revised 1997, cost \$5.00 and may be ordered from the National Association for the Education of Young Children at 1-800-424-2460.

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With assistance from the South Carolina Careful Antibiotic Use Taskforce



Because *sometimes*  
the **best** medicine  
is **no** medicine.

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## Information for Child Care Providers and Parents



SC CAUse Taskforce

People from all over the state of South Carolina have joined DHEC officials in their effort to spread the word about the growing danger of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. South Carolina physicians, nurses, teachers, health educators, childcare directors, social workers, pharmacists, health insurance providers, and leaders of parent-teacher organizations have formed a task force promoting Careful Antibiotic Use (C.A.Use). South Carolina is one of the first states in the nation to develop a statewide program based on the C.A.Use campaign begun by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

## Two kinds of germs make us sick

Bacteria and viruses are two major types of germs that make us sick. Both can cause similar symptoms. Often it is only possible to tell the difference between the two types of infections by physical examination and/or laboratory tests in a healthcare provider's office.

## Antibiotic resistance is a growing problem:

Bacteria are called "**antibiotic-resistant**" when the medicine used to treat them does not work anymore. Infections caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria are becoming a serious health threat. In 1999 the CDC reported the deaths of four children from antibiotic-resistant bacteria. If the problem continues, this number



will go up. It also happens when people taking antibiotics skip doses or stop taking their medicine too early.

## The good news:

When antibiotics are used carefully, bacterial resistance slows down. Careful use includes taking antibiotics **only** when prescribed by a healthcare provider, and taking them **exactly** as prescribed until all the medication is gone. The medication needs to be used up to make sure all the disease-causing bacteria are killed.

## Parents need to know:

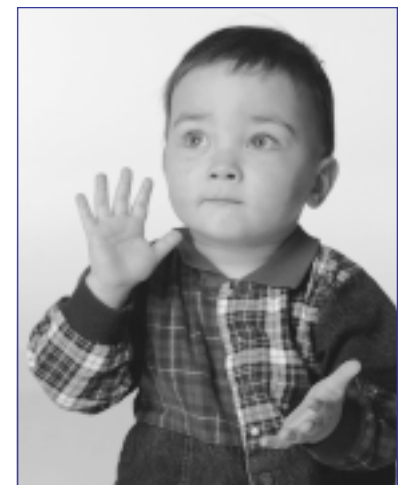
- Children's immunizations ("baby shots") should be kept up-to-date.
- Be familiar with the health policies of their child's center. Review health procedures and encourage frequent handwashing by personnel and children.
- Young children normally get sick 5 to 6 times a year. Viruses cause most of these illnesses. These episodes can last up to two weeks each.
- Parents need to plan ahead for days when their child cannot attend childcare or class due to illness. This plan may include saving their employee vacation time for use when they may need to take care of a sick child.
- Only a child's healthcare provider can tell for sure if an antibiotic is or is not needed.
- Tell the childcare provider if their child has been diagnosed with an infectious illness.

## Childcare providers need to:

- Maintain a high level of cleanliness and practice infection control measures as recommended by the CDC and required by

childcare licensing authorities. This includes **frequent and appropriate hand washing**.

- While strictly protecting the identity of the diagnosed child, the childcare provider can post notices of any diagnosed illnesses for the parents of the sick child's classmates. This will help these parents recognize early symptoms and enable them to share the information with their healthcare provider.
- Review the childcare center's policy on readmission of diagnosed children to group or class. Follow requirements listed in childcare licensing regulations.
- Some childcare centers will only give medication to children if the child's health care provider prescribes it. This includes over-the-counter medications. This policy is similar to those required by the state's public schools.



## Remember...

- Most colds and illnesses with symptoms such as cough, nasal discharge and sore throats are caused by viruses and do not benefit from antibiotics. Antibiotics may actually cause harm because of allergic reactions and can promote antibiotic resistance.
- In South Carolina, over one-quarter of colds are treated with antibiotics, all unnecessary.
- Child Care Center policies should only require that children be on antibiotic treatment if the illness is bacterial and appropriately ordered by the healthcare provider.