



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Don't take'em if you don't need'em
November 14-20 is Antibiotic Awareness Week

LAS VEGAS – Antibiotics are among the greatest discoveries. The discovery of penicillin alone has saved millions of lives. Antibiotic resistance because of overuse or improper use can limit some of the resources health care providers have to fight life threatening illnesses, like whooping cough.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), antibiotic resistant infections in the United States are responsible for \$20 billion in excess health care costs and eight million additional hospital days. More than \$1.1 billion is spent each year for unnecessary antibiotics for respiratory infections in adults.

The best medicine to protect against antibiotic resistance is proper use of the medication. Patients can assist in reducing antibiotic resistance by better understanding how they are used and how they should not be used. Antibiotics are not always appropriate for every illness. The medications work against bacterial infections, like strep throat, not for viral infections such as influenza. Misuse of antibiotics can present problems for patients because resistant strains of bacteria can be spread from person to person promoting drug-resistant infections that become difficult to treat.

Some tips for using antibiotics correctly:

- Allow your physician to determine treatment and whether or not antibiotics are appropriate
- Take antibiotics exactly as prescribed by a health care provider. Do not skip doses. Complete the treatment, even if you feel better
- Do not share antibiotics or save the medication for later use
- Discard leftover medication appropriately in the event there is medication remaining when the course of treatment is completed.

The CDC's Get Smart: Know When Antibiotics Work campaign is an educational program to provide information to consumers, patients, health care providers, insurers, and veterinarians about appropriate antibiotic use. Information is available on the CDC website:

<http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/campaigns.html>

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Antibiotic Awareness – add one

The Southern Nevada Health District worked closely with Nevadans for Antibiotic Awareness to develop the Clark County Antibigram, a snapshot of antibiotic resistance in the community. The antibiogram is a tool to assist health care providers decide an appropriate course of treatment for patients. The Clark County Antibigram is available on the News & Information page under Statistics and Reports of the health district's website, www.SNHD.info.

Health District can be found on Facebook www.facebook.com/SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict, on YouTube www.youtube.com/SNHealthDistrict or Twitter www.twitter.com/SNHDInfo and www.GetHealthyClarkCounty.org. The health district is now available in Spanish on Twitter www.twitter.com/TuSNHD.