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Today, in U.S. doctors' offices and emergency departments, at least 28% of antibiotic courses prescribed each year are unnecessary. While antibiotics and antifungals are important to treat infections, any time they are used they can cause side effects and contribute to the development of antimicrobial resistance. In the U.S. alone, more than 2.8 million antimicrobial-resistant infections occur each year, with more than 35,000 deaths resulting from these infections. Antimicrobial resistance is an urgent threat to public health worldwide. Preventing infections and improving the use of antibiotics helps keep us healthy now, fight antimicrobial resistance, and ensures these life-saving drugs will be available for future generations.

Based on 2021 CDC data, Nebraska is in the top 10 high antibiotic prescribing states with 760 antibiotic prescriptions per 1000 population, which is higher than the national average of 640 antibiotic prescriptions per 1000 population. In an effort to improve knowledge of appropriate antibiotic prescribing, Nebraska DHHS partners with Nebraska ASAP (Antimicrobial Stewardship Assessment and Promotion Program). Nebraska ASAP is a team of local subject matter experts including infectious disease-trained physicians and pharmacists that serves as a resource for all healthcare facilities in the state, including hospitals, long-term care facilities, outpatient clinics, dental offices, and others. Nebraska ASAP provides free technical assistance to healthcare facilities on setting up programs focused on improving antibiotic prescribing. The team also organizes various educational events to raise awareness on antibiotic use. Healthcare providers can find more information on Nebraska ASAP on their website [[Home - ASAP \(nebraskamed.com\)](https://www.nebraskamed.com)] and can also take an [online survey](#) for self-assessment of antimicrobial stewardship practice in their setting.

### **During U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week and throughout the year, remember...**

- ✓ We can do harm by prescribing antibiotics when they are not needed. Remind patients that antibiotics are only needed to treat certain infections caused by bacteria, not viruses like those that cause COVID-19.
- ✓ Talk to your patients about why they don't need antibiotics for a viral respiratory infection, what to do to feel better, and when to seek care again if they don't feel better.
- ✓ Always prescribe the right antibiotic, at the right dose, for the right duration, and at the right time.
- ✓ Using the shortest effective duration of antibiotic therapy is a key antibiotic stewardship strategy. The goal is to optimize the treatment of the infection while minimizing the risks of side effects from antibiotics and antimicrobial resistance.
- ✓ Talk to patients and their families about possible harms from antibiotics, such as allergic reactions, *C. difficile* and antimicrobial-resistant infections.
- ✓ Educate your patients and their families to recognize the signs and symptoms of worsening infection and sepsis, and to know when to seek medical care.
- ✓ If sepsis is suspected, gather patient information and immediately communicate it to hospital healthcare professionals. Antibiotics should be started as soon as possible when sepsis is suspected.

**Improve Antibiotic Use,  
Improve Health Equity**



**More information and educational materials on U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week can be found at [U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week \(USAAW\) | Antibiotic Use | CDC](#)**



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