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Established in 1945, DuPage County Health Department promotes physical and emotional health; prevents illness injury and disability; protects health from environmental risk factors, and strives to assure the provision of accessible, quality service.

November 13, 2017

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### DuPage County Health Department supports CDC's new *Be Antibiotics Aware* educational effort

**DUPAGE COUNTY**—Kicking off U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week November 13-19 and World Antibiotic Awareness Week, DuPage County Health Department joins the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in encouraging patients, families and healthcare professionals to *Be Antibiotics Aware* by learning about safe antibiotic prescribing and use.

Each year in the United States, at least 2 million people get infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria. At least 23,000 die as a result. Antibiotic resistance, one of the most urgent threats to the public's health, occurs when bacteria no longer respond to the drugs designed to kill them.

*Be Antibiotics Aware* provides educational resources to help healthcare professionals improve antibiotic prescribing. *Be Antibiotics Aware* educates the public on what illnesses antibiotics treat, how to take antibiotics appropriately, and that antibiotics can have minor to very severe side effects. The resources include fact sheets, a brochure, infographics, and social media, video and audio tools.

Antibiotics are critical tools for treating a number of common infections, such as pneumonia, and for life-threatening conditions including sepsis. Antibiotics are only needed for treating certain infections caused by bacteria. Antibiotics also won't help some common bacterial infections including most cases of bronchitis, many sinus infections, and some ear infections.

Any time antibiotics are used, they can cause side effects and lead to antibiotic resistance. When antibiotics aren't needed, they won't help, and the side effects could still hurt you. Common side effects range from things like rashes and yeast infections to severe health problems like *Clostridium difficile* infection (also called *C. difficile* or *C. diff*), which causes diarrhea that can lead to severe colon damage and death.

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If you need antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed. Patients and families can talk to their healthcare professional if they have any questions about their antibiotics, or if they develop side effects, especially diarrhea, since that could be *C. difficile*, which needs to be treated.

Antibiotics do not work on viruses, such as colds and flu, or runny noses, even if the mucus is thick, yellow or green. Respiratory viruses usually go away in a week or two without treatment. Patients and families can ask their healthcare professional about the best way to feel better while their body fights off the virus.

We can all stay healthy and keep others healthy by cleaning our hands, covering our coughs, staying home when sick, and getting recommended vaccines, for the flu, for example.

Antibiotics save lives. When a patient needs antibiotics, the benefits outweigh the risks of side effects and antibiotic resistance. Improving the way we take antibiotics helps keep us healthy now, helps fight antibiotic resistance, and ensures that life-saving antibiotics will be available for future generations.

To learn more about *Be Antibiotics Aware* resources and antibiotic prescribing and use, visit [www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use](http://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use).

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