

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release:
October 16, 2017

For More Information, Contact:
Faye Salzer
Division of Disease Control
Phone: 701.328.2378
E-mail: fsalzer@nd.gov

The North Dakota Department of Health Observes Infection Prevention Week

BISMARCK, N.D. – In conjunction with International Infection Prevention Week, Oct. 15-21, 2017, the North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) is raising awareness about antibiotic resistance. Antibiotics are used to kill bacteria that cause illness. Antibiotic resistance is when an antibiotic does not affect the bacteria, and the bacteria is able to continue to multiply in the body.

“Antibiotics only work on infections caused by bacteria. They will not help you if you have an infection caused by a virus,” said Faye Salzer, Healthcare Associated Infections Coordinator with NDDoH. “Some infections caused by viruses such as colds, bronchitis, or the flu should not be treated with antibiotics. If someone takes antibiotics when they are not needed, they could feel worse and develop serious side-effects including a resistance to antibiotics,” said Salzer. “One in five emergency department visits for adverse drug reactions are caused by antibiotics.”

Ways that antibiotic-resistant infections can be prevented:

- **Only use antibiotics when necessary** – Don’t demand treatment from your health care provider for conditions such as a cold or the flu, when antibiotics are not needed and will not help. If you take antibiotics when you don’t need them, you are putting yourself at unnecessary risk for an adverse drug reaction.
- **Use antibiotics as directed** – When given an antibiotic for an infection, they should be taken exactly as prescribed. Do not skip doses or stop taking them unless directed by your provider. Do not save unused antibiotics for future use or give to others and do not take antibiotics prescribed for others.
- **Wash your hands** – Handwashing is the easiest way to prevent germs from entering your body and making you sick.
- **Get immunized** – When people are up-to-date on all of their recommended vaccines, it reduces the overall number of infections, which also reduces the use of antibiotics to treat infection. It is better to prevent a disease than to treat it

For more information, contact Faye Salzer, NDDoH, at 701.328.2378 or visit www.ndhealth.gov/disease/hai.

- end -