

Script – Broadcast – Do you really need that antibiotic?

INTRO

During those times of the year when we're feeling down and out, we hope a prescription from the doctor might do the trick to get us back on our feet.

But that's not always the case, especially when it comes to antibiotic resistance, says Michelle Brady, dean of Graduate Affairs and Research for Saint Anthony College of Nursing in Rockford, one of two colleges of nursing owned and supported by OSF HealthCare.

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Michelle Brady, dean of Graduate Affairs and Research, Saint Anthony College of Nursing, Rockford

"Antibiotic resistance is when bacteria no longer respond to the medications or antibiotics that we give you to treat an infection. It's a change in the bacteria, not a change in us." (:11)

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The problems with antibiotic resistance include risk of longer illness or death, severe medication side effects, additional medical appointments and extended hospital stays.

One of the biggest issues is overuse of antibiotics. For example, you wouldn't take antibiotics for a sore throat, which is a viral and not a bacterial illness. Another problem is the misuse of antibiotics. If you forget to take one or more doses of your antibiotic or stop using the medicine too soon, bacteria can start to multiply, and mutated bacteria can quickly become resistant to medicine.

Alissa Bartel is a nurse practitioner with OSF HealthCare. She says when people don't feel well, obviously they want something to help them. She adds it's important for providers to be well-educated and prepared to talk to patients about why antibiotics aren't always good for them, why they don't always treat the problem and possible alternatives.

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Alissa Bartel, nurse practitioner, OSF HealthCare

"If your body is stressed and your chronic conditions are not well cared for, you are at greater risk of developing any of these infections, which can turn serious very quickly," she says. "So stay up to date on your visits with your primary care provider, ask them questions and try to stay as healthy as possible to prevent illness without using antibiotics." (:21)

TAG

As winter approaches, physician offices are seeing more people experiencing respiratory infections, colds, flu, RSV and COVID symptoms. Unfortunately, antibiotics will not help treat those viral infections.

That's why Bartel encourages patients to remember good hand hygiene, keep your hands away from your face and mouth and practice self-care to reduce your level of stress. It's also important to stay up to date on vaccines for flu, COVID and RSV if you qualify.