Here's what you can do to help:

- Stay healthy
- Don't take antibiotics for viral infections, like colds and flu
- Wash your hands often – especially after sneezing or coughing
- Immunize yourself and your family. Get your flu shot each fall.

Antibiotics are powerful medicines with one very important job: they fight bacteria. Misuse and over-prescribing of these drugs causes bacteria to become resistant to them. Resistant bacteria are harder for doctors to treat and some can't be treated at all.

This brochure contains helpful information about antibiotics, what you can do to preserve their effectiveness and thus protect our antibiotic lifeline.

For more information, visit our website: www.reducemisuse.org

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What is an antibiotic?
An antibiotic is a strong drug that kills bacteria or stops them from growing. Your health care provider must diagnose your infection to decide if an antibiotic is needed, and if so, which one is right for you.

When do I need an antibiotic?
Antibiotics fight bacteria; they can’t fight viral infections, like colds and flu. See your health care provider to find out what type of infection you have and if an antibiotic is needed.

What causes antibiotic resistance?
Each time you take an antibiotic, sensitive bacteria are killed, but resistant ones may be left to grow and multiply. Overuse and misuse of antibiotics increases the growth and spread of these resistant bacteria.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Viruses cause:</th>
<th>Bacteria cause:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Colds and flu</td>
<td>Some sinus infections</td>
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<tr>
<td>Most coughs</td>
<td>Strept throat</td>
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<td>Most sore throats</td>
<td>Urinary tract infections</td>
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<td>Some ear aches</td>
<td>Some ear infections</td>
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<td>Acute bronchitis</td>
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<td>Laryngitis</td>
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What can I do to help?
• Do not take antibiotics for viral infections, like colds or flu.
• If your doctor prescribes an antibiotic, take it exactly as written on the label. Take all of the medicine, even if you’re feeling better.
• Do not share your medication or save it for later use.
• Wash your hands often, especially after coughing or sneezing.

How do I treat a cold or flu?
• Get plenty of rest
• Drink lots of liquids
• Take over-the-counter medicine for relief of symptoms:
  - Fever & discomfort: acetaminophen or ibuprofen
  - Nasal congestion and sinus pressure: oral decongestants
  - Sore throat: throat spray, lozenges, cough drops or a salt-water gargle
  - Coughs: steamy shower or humidifier; if more relief is needed, use cough syrup or throat spray.

Health problems from overuse.
Overuse of antibiotics can increase the number of serious bacterial infections, like *Clostridium difficile* (C. diff). This type of bacteria causes severe diarrhea that may be life threatening, especially for the elderly and people in the hospital.

The future of our antibiotic lifeline is in your hands.
Preventing illness is the best way to protect our antibiotic lifeline. Wash your hands with plain soap and water if your hands are visibly soiled (dirty), before eating, and after using the restroom. Alcohol-based hand rubs work well too, as long as your hands are not dirty.

Join the MARR Resistance Ranger and help protect our antibiotic lifeline.

MARR
Michigan Antibiotic Resistance Reduction Coalition
www.reduce misuse.org