

Dear Parent/Carer,

Wednesday, 18 to Tuesday, 24 November 2020 is World Antibiotic Awareness Week (WAAW), with European Antibiotic Awareness Day on Wednesday, 18 November.

We would like to take this opportunity to talk to you about antibiotics. We want to make sure you and your child get the best treatment whilst keeping this incredible resource for future generations.

- **Hand washing with soap and water is very important**
It stops the spread of common infections, especially tummy bugs like norovirus
- **Antibiotics do not work on viruses, which are the most common cause of your child's cough, cold, tummy bug or ear infection.**
Antibiotics might make things worse and have nasty side effects.
- **If you do receive antibiotics, please finish the complete course, and never share them with anybody else.**
This means that your child's infection is properly treated and that we are not making antibiotics ineffective for future use.

How should I treat my cold?

- Drink plenty of fluids and rest.
- Ask your pharmacist for advice.
- If the cold lasts more than three weeks, or you become breathless or have chest pains, or already have a chest complaint, speak to your doctor.

Why is my child always getting coughs and colds?

- It is very common for children to get coughs and colds, especially when they go to school and mix with other children.
- Ask your pharmacist for advice or go online to [Health Help Now: http://southeastlondon.healthhelpnow.nhs.uk/](http://southeastlondon.healthhelpnow.nhs.uk/)
- If the symptoms persist and you are concerned, speak to your doctor but you should not expect to be prescribed antibiotics.

When might I or my child be prescribed antibiotics?

Your doctor will only prescribe antibiotics when you need them, for example for a kidney infection or pneumonia. Antibiotics may be life-saving for infections such as meningitis. By not using them unnecessarily, they are more likely to work when we need them.

Want to see the difference 20 seconds make to handwashing under UV light? [Watch this YouTube video from Public Health England. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HegTUvA8AVE&app=desktop](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HegTUvA8AVE&app=desktop)

Finally, we invite you to become an Antibiotic Guardian by making a pledge at:

<https://antibioticguardian.com/>. You can also film your pledge and share with friends and family to help raise awareness.

Yours faithfully,
Dr Aparna Babu

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