Antibiotics

Honoring Choices® FLORIDA

A program of Community Hospice & Palliative Care in collaboration with Northeast Florida hospitals

What are Antibiotics?

Antibiotics are drugs used to treat infections that are caused by bacteria. For example, they are used to treat such illnesses as:

- Pneumonia
- Urinary tract infections
- Strep throat

- Bacterial ear infection
- Kidney Infections
- Sinus infections

What are the benefits?

Antibiotics can:

- Stop infection from spreading
- Treat painful conditions like urinary tract infections, skin infections and tooth decay

What are the risks?

- Increases the possibility of getting a resistant infection in the future
- Upset stomach
- Nausea, vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Killing of "good bacteria" living inside your body
- Allergic reactions such as breathing problems, rashes, swelling of face and throat

Your doctor can help you understand more about your risk factors and possible side effects.

Antibiotics do not work for:

- The common cold or flu (both are caused by a virus)
- Most coughs
- Most sore throats
- Most bronchitis

Antibiotics fight infection and may ease discomfort, but they will not cure a chronic or terminal illness.

Consider these Questions

Everyone has the right to make their own health care choices and inform others of their wishes in the event they cannot speak for themselves someday. These are questions to think and talk about as you decide about antibiotics use:

- What makes life meaningful for me?
- Under what conditions/situations would I want to be given antibiotics?
- In what conditions/situations would I not want antibiotics?
- Would I want treatment with antibiotics if:

  - I have a terminal illness?
  - I have an end-stage medical condition?
  - I am unable to recognize my loved ones or know who I am?

Remember to inform your doctors, family and loved ones about your wishes and decisions regarding antibiotics as part of your advance care planning.