

PLEASE READ THIS IMPORTANT MESSAGE

TO OUR HERITAGE VALLEY PEDIATRIC PATIENT FAMILIES

Over the past several years it has become clear that antibiotic use in patients that do not have bacterial infections poses a risk to children and communities. We at Heritage Valley Pediatrics strive to limit antibiotic use to patients with illnesses that require this treatment. Fortunately, most common childhood illnesses do not need treatment with antibiotics and these illnesses improve with 'symptom' care.

In order to provide your child with the safest and best care, we have instituted some specific guidelines for the use of antibiotics, as well as some suggestions for you at home:

- 1) **We will no longer prescribe antibiotics over the phone without having seen the patient, or done a 'face to face' evaluation of their illness.** This would include symptoms of earache, pus-like nose drainage, cough, sore throats or exposure to siblings with strep throat. Many circumstances occur where antibiotics might be needed, but another disorder is present that makes their use unnecessary or dangerous.
- 2) **When antibiotics are needed, we will choose the medication we feel best suits the needs of your child to rid them of their infection.**
- 3) **When the antibiotic is finished, either pills or liquid, discard the 'leftovers' and do not give these drugs to other persons in the house without checking first with the office.** This is particularly true of medication received by adults at home. Frequently we will see patients who have received antibiotics 'I had at home' who may now require much more extensive evaluation or treatment because of the medication, or may have a more chronic smoldering infection that has not totally cleared.
- 4) **We will explain why antibiotics are needed or not needed for your child each time this decision is made, and we encourage you to ask any questions you have about this to the doctor or nurses.**

We believe these policies will provide the best care for your child, and protect them from the risks of community wide overuse of these drugs. If you have any questions or concerns, please let us know.

Sincerely,

The Physicians and Physician Assistants of Heritage Valley Pediatrics