

Dear Parent,

This week, your child participated in an interactive, hands-on, health session titled “Antibiotics & You,” sponsored by Oregon Alliance Working for Antibiotic Resistance Education (AWARE). The presentation covered:

- Germs: viruses and bacteria; how germs spread
- The body’s immune system: how your body fights infection
- Stay healthy messages: wash your hands frequently with soap and water; eat well; exercise; get plenty of rest
- Antibiotics: how these miracle drugs work
- Antibiotic resistance: what you can do to protect yourself and others

Antibiotics are powerful drugs, but they are only effective against **bacterial** infections. Antibiotics don’t treat illnesses caused by viruses, such as the common cold and flu. Using antibiotics when they are not necessary promotes the development of “resistant” bacteria. This means bacteria can “learn” to fight back against the antibiotic. As a result, some antibiotics, like penicillin, are no longer effective against some bacteria they used to kill.

Please encourage your child to put into practice the skills he or she learned today. You can make a difference! The AWARE Coalition reminds you that:

- Hand washing is the single most effective means of preventing the spread of infection. Wash your hands often with soap and water.
- Prevention is the best medicine. Take care of yourself and stay healthy.
- Never take antibiotics for a viral infection, like the common cold or flu.
- If your doctor gives you an antibiotic, take it exactly as directed; don’t share the medication with others or save it for later use.

For more information about the AWARE Coalition and the issue of antibiotic resistance, please visit our website at <http://www.healthoregon.org/antibiotics>. Download the latest information, guides for parents on childhood issues (like ear infections) and activity books for children.

Wishing you good health!

The AWARE Coalition & Your School Health Team