



WINTER 2016 NEWSLETTER

WHY NO ANTIBIOTIC?

As the winter cold sets in, so do winter colds. Millions of Americans will visit their provider for some form of upper respiratory tract infection ("head cold") or lower respiratory tract infection ("chest cold") at some point this year. These infections often make sufferers feel miserable, and patients who seek medical treatment for their symptoms often expect that they will be prescribed an antibiotic of some kind. However, antibiotics are often not the most appropriate treatment for colds. Here's why...

Antibiotics are designed to kill bacteria. They are not active in fighting viruses. When a provider prescribes an antibiotic, they believe an infection is due to bacteria.

Unfortunately, viruses (rather than bacteria) cause most colds. Viruses like rhinovirus and coronavirus are likely to blame for your cough, sinus infection and sore throat. And when this is the case, antibiotics are unlikely to offer any relief. In fact, the CDC estimates that about 30% of prescribed antibiotics are unneeded.

Additionally, inappropriate prescribing of antibiotics can lead to other problems. An unnecessary antibiotic puts the individual patient at risk from the side effects that antibiotics, like all drugs, may cause. And these side effects can range from inconvenient to life-threatening. Furthermore, over-prescribing threatens the population at large, as it increases the likelihood that antibiotics will be less effective when they are truly needed.

It is still important to see your provider when you are feeling ill, so that they can determine if an antibiotic or other prescription treatment option is appropriate. But when no antibiotic is prescribed, know that your provider does have your best interest in mind.

FP Associates Would Like to Introduce RetinaVue

Diabetic patients likely know the importance of annual eye exams. While annual eye exams are a good idea for everyone, they are extra important for individuals with diabetes, as the disease can lead to a complication known as diabetic retinopathy. Diabetic retinopathy can progress quickly and often does not cause any symptoms until it is advanced. Diabetic retinopathy is the leading cause of vision loss in individuals between the ages of 25 and 74. Thus, it is important for diabetics to have their eyes examined at least annually.

FP Associates now has a new piece of equipment that allows us to perform this eye exam in our clinic for many of our diabetic patients. RetinaVue is a high-tech camera that takes a picture of the back of the eyeball. These pictures are then sent electronically to an ophthalmologist, who interprets them and determines if any diabetic retinopathy is present. This saves some diabetic patients from the inconvenience of scheduling an additional appointment with an eye doctor.

However, in some cases it may still be necessary for patients to visit their eye doctor. For example, when patients have additional vision concerns or conditions affecting the eye, as well as when our clinic staff is unable to obtain adequate pictures with the RetinaVue. But for many diabetic patients, RetinaVue is a great option.

If you are diabetic and in need of an annual eye exam, talk to our clinic staff about RetinaVue today!



New Year's Resolutions

With the New Year upon us, many individuals resolve to work towards a healthier lifestyle. However, as January turns into February, those resolutions that were so shiny at the dawning of a new year start to lose their luster. With that in mind, FP Associates would like to offer five easy ideas for making 2017 healthier:

1. **Take More Steps.** Walking more has many health benefits. It can lower blood pressure, decrease blood sugar, and increase calories burned. Exercise also increases the level of endorphins, which are chemicals in the brain that decrease pain perception and increase feelings of wellbeing. Whether by counting steps throughout the day, opting for the stairs instead of the elevator, or getting outside for a brisk evening stroll, simply walking more each day is a great way to increase physical activity.
2. **Eat More Colors.** Incorporating more color into your diet is an easy plan for increasing the numbers of fruits and vegetables you are enjoying. Fruits and vegetables come in a plethora of colors, and are an easy snack option, as they often require only a quick rinse before they are enjoyed. Eating more colors is also a great way to encourage kids to eat healthier. Aim for five or more colors per day! (And we know what you are thinking - you cannot separately count all the colors in a handful of skittles!)
3. **Shop the Perimeter.** Think about the grocery store you frequent most often. It is likely that the outside edges of the store are where you will find the healthiest foods. Fruits and vegetables, healthy dairy, and lean proteins are most often found at the perimeter of the store. On the other hand, processed foods are often stocked deep in the aisles. The next time you go to the grocery store, shop the outside edges first, and try to only venture into the aisles to pick up specific items you know you need.
4. **Improve Sleep Hygiene.** Everyone knows that getting eight hours of sleep is important for our health. Adequate sleep sharpens attention, decreases perceived stress, elevates mood, and is even important in maintaining a healthy weight. Here are some ideas that can help improve sleep: avoid working, reading, and watching TV in bed; avoid unnecessary daytime naps; increase physical activity and exercise; avoid alcohol, caffeine, and nicotine before bed; plan your bedtime early enough to allow yourself to get situated and fall asleep in time to get a full eight hours.
5. **Exercise Your Brain.** Mental activity and learning can improve memory, mood, and mental sharpness. Try working crossword puzzles, Sudoku puzzles, word searches and word scrambles. Reading a book, listening to music, working on a jigsaw puzzle, or enjoying an online lecture such as TED talks are also great ways to continue to learn and keep your brain healthy!

FP Associates wishes you a healthy and happy 2017!

FP Associates, P.C. provides quality and compassionate care for your entire family.

As family physicians, we provide a wide range of medical care for patients of all ages. Physical exams, laboratory services, ECG, spirometry, and X-ray studies are done on site. Minor surgical procedures are performed in our office as well.

Monday and Wednesday evenings and Saturday morning appointments are available for urgent medical care and to accommodate your busy family schedules. Make FP Associates your medical home!



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