

to your

# Health!

"Promoting Good Health Through Information"

Veterans Affairs Palo Alto Health Care System • Patient Education Newsletter • Fall 2007

## Keep Our Antibiotics Strong!

Jenny Chen, Pharmacy Student

Many people think that antibiotics are a cure for all infections. In fact, some of us would go to our doctor's office and ask for an antibiotic whenever we think we have an infection. But do you know that antibiotics only work for infections that are caused by bacteria? They don't work for viral infections. The incorrect use of antibiotics can lead to tougher bacteria that are harder to treat, and eventually the need for stronger antibiotics.

How do bacteria become tougher in the first place, you may ask? Antibiotics kill or stop bacteria from growing. But some bacteria, once they have seen an antibiotic, can change themselves in a way that makes the same antibiotic no longer work. The more we use an antibiotic, the faster the bacteria can change and become resistant to the antibiotic. If we don't finish a course of antibiotics or if we skip too many doses, this makes it easier for the bacteria to become resistant.

A study by the California Department of Health Services in 2001 showed a 30% resistance rate to penicillin for a common bacterium that causes lung and middle ear infections. That is one out of three people in California may not respond to penicillin-type antibiotics when treated!

There are only a limited number of antibiotics. What happens if the strongest one no longer works? That's a scary thought, isn't it? Fortunately we have antibiotics that

*(Continued on page 2.)*

## Recipe for Health CRUNCHY PUMPKIN PIE

### Ingredients:

#### For the Filling:

- 1/4 cup brown sugar, packed
- 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp. ground nutmeg
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 2/3 cup evaporated skim milk

#### For the Crust:

- 1 cup quick cooking oats
- 1/4 cup whole wheat flour
- 1/4 cup ground almonds
- 2 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 1/4 tsp. salt
- 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 Tbsp. water

### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 °F.
- To prepare crust:*
2. Mix oats, flour, almonds, sugar, and salt in small mixing bowl.
3. Blend oil and water in measuring cup with fork or small wire whisk until emulsified.
4. Add oil mixture to dry ingredients and mix well. If needed, add small amount of water to hold mixture together.
5. Press into 9-inch pie pan, and bake for 8–10 minutes, or until light brown.
6. Turn down oven to 350 °F.

#### *To prepare filling:*

7. Mix sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, and salt in bowl.
8. Add egg and vanilla, and mix to blend ingredients.
9. Add pumpkin and milk, and stir to combine.

#### *Putting it together:*

10. Pour filling into prepared pie shell.
11. Bake for 45 minutes at 350 °F or until knife inserted near center comes out clean.

Yields: 9 servings

Serving Size: 1/9 of 9-inch pie

Each serving provides:

Calories: 169; Total fat: 7 g; Saturated fat: 1 g;  
Cholesterol: 24 mg; Sodium: 207 mg; Fiber: 3 g;  
Protein: 5 g; Carbohydrates: 22 g; Potassium: 223 mg

[www.nhlbi.nih.gov](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov)

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Antibiotic Use Quiz.....	2
Medication Resources for You! .....	3
Chaplain Services .....	3
Tips for Healthy Living .....	4

# Test Your Knowledge on Antibiotic Use

1. Antibiotics are used to treat infections caused by all the following EXCEPT:
  - A. Worms
  - B. Bacteria
  - C. Viruses
  - D. Fungi
2. How can you cause bacteria to become resistant to antibiotics?
  - A. When you use antibiotics to treat the flu
  - B. When you don't finish all the antibiotic the doctor gave to you
  - C. When you skip doses of your antibiotic
  - D. None of the above, there is nothing you can do to prevent antibiotic resistance
  - E. A, B & C
3. **True or False:** Your friend has a cold just like the one you had about a week ago. You have left over antibiotics that your doctor gave to you so you should give them to your friend until he/she can see their doctor.
4. **True or False:** Once you start to feel better, you should stop taking your antibiotic to prevent the development of resistance.
5. **True or False:** If your doctor thinks that you do not have a bacterial infection, ask about ways to help you feel better. But do not forget to remind your provider to write you a prescription for an antibiotic.

## Answers:

1. C
2. E
3. False
4. False
5. False

(continued from page 1)

## Strong Antibiotics

are still strong enough to fight most bugs. But to preserve what we have we must not use antibiotics unless we really need them.

What can you do to help? Following are some useful tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

1. Talk with your healthcare provider:
  - Ask if an antibiotic is likely to help you.
  - Ask what else you can do to feel better sooner.
2. DO NOT take an antibiotic for a viral infection like a cold or the flu.
3. DO NOT save some of your antibiotic for the next time you get sick. Throw away any leftover medication once you have finished your course of treatment.
4. Take an antibiotic exactly as your healthcare provider tells you. DO NOT skip doses.
5. Finish the course of antibiotic even if you are feeling better. If you don't finish your antibiotics, some bacteria may live and cause another infection and may become resistant to antibiotics.
6. DO NOT take someone else's antibiotic. The antibiotic may not work for your particular infection. Taking the wrong medicine may delay correct treatment and allow bacteria to grow.
7. If your healthcare provider thinks that you do not have a bacterial infection, ask about ways to help you feel better. DO NOT pressure your provider to write you a prescription for an antibiotic.

By using antibiotics smartly, we can win the battle against bacteria!

*Reference:*

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm4830a3.htm>

[http://www.aware.md/facts/anti\\_facts.asp](http://www.aware.md/facts/anti_facts.asp)

# Medication Resources For You!

*Elissa Wong, Pharmacy Student*

Do you ever have questions about your medications, but don't know where to find the answer? Are you worried about food or alcohol interactions, side effects, available generics, or missed doses? Here are some ways to find answers.

The FDA (Food and Drug Administration) has a useful website called "Consumer Education: Ensuring Safe Use of Medicine." A variety of online brochures, some also available in Spanish, cover the following topics:

- General use of prescription and over-the-counter medicine
- Driving when you are using medicine
- Safe use of medicines for seniors.

Some useful brochures include: "6 Tips to Avoid Medication Mistakes", "Drug Interactions: What You Should Know", "Driving When You are Taking Medications", and "Medi-

cation and You: A Guide for Older Adults." This website can be found at [http://www.fda.gov/cder/consumerinfo/ensuring\\_safe\\_use\\_text.htm](http://www.fda.gov/cder/consumerinfo/ensuring_safe_use_text.htm).

Request printed copies by email at [dpapubs@fda.hhs.gov](mailto:dpapubs@fda.hhs.gov) or by phone at 1-301-827-1243 (to speak with an FDA representative) or 1-888-INFO-FDA (automated phone system).

Another useful website is MedlinePlus. This website is perfect for people who want to look up specific facts on drugs or herbal supplements. You can browse or look up information using the first letter of the drug or herbal supplement. There is also a medical dictionary, information on general health topics, and much more.

Access this website at [medlineplus.gov](http://medlineplus.gov) or for the Spanish version, go to [medlineplus.gov/spanish](http://medlineplus.gov/spanish)

*(Continued on page 4.)*

## Chaplain Services at VAPAHCS

*Penny Philips, Chaplain*

How do you think VA Staff Chaplains spend their time here in the hospital? Chaplains do a variety of activities and provide different kinds of support for patients, families and staff. Mainly we are here to accompany patients during their hospital stay. Our goal is to provide a safe and confidential atmosphere in which veterans can find support in maintaining optimal spiritual health.

Pastoral care services include: celebrating various religious holidays; crisis intervention; grief support; chapel programs; pre- and post-surgery support; sacramental ministry; liaison with local community clergy; spirituality groups; counseling and emotional support. All of our pastoral care, assessment, and treatment are designed to address the spiritual needs and concerns of veterans.

We provide companionship for patients during their hospital stay. We listen, we support, we encourage, and we affirm each Veteran's faith journey and personal spiritual-

ity. Sometimes chaplains will facilitate groups to support patients in recovery programs, strengthen their faith, or to discuss different issues.

On Sunday mornings at Palo Alto, we provide a Catholic worship service at 9 AM and a Protestant Worship service at 10:30 AM. Every Wednesday at 12:30 PM, we have a meditation service in the Palo Alto chapel. At the Livermore campus, there is Catholic Mass at 2 PM on Sundays in Building 64, and at 10:30 AM in the nursing home. There is also a Protestant Service at 2:30 PM in the nursing home. At Menlo Park there are Catholic and Protestant Sunday services. Everyone is welcome to all services.

Our VAPAHCS Staff Chaplains represent many faith groups and minister to patients of all religious traditions. Our Chaplain Service values diversity and strives to provide an open and supportive environment for the pastoral and spiritual care of all our veterans.

