How to rethink Antibiotic Prescriptions

1. Look it up to get it right
   Up to 30% of antibiotic prescriptions in community are for:
   - Wrong dose
   - Wrong length of therapy
   - Wrong drug
   - A viral infection

2. Weigh the risks and benefits
   Up to 25% of people taking antibiotics have side effects
   - Common side effects: diarrhea, nausea, headache, rash, and antibiotic resistance
   - Rare, but serious side effects: kidney and liver damage, and *C. difficile* infection

3. Choose the shortest effective course of therapy
   Shorter courses are often just as effective, with fewer side effects
   - Cystitis (3-5 days)
   - Otitis media (5 days)*
     *In kids over 2 years old
   - Cellulitis (5 days)
   - Acute sinusitis (5 days)†
     †In adults
   - Community acquired pneumonia (5 days)

4. Investigate penicillin allergies
   While ~10% of patients report a penicillin allergy, only 1% are truly allergic
   - Get details about the reaction and refer for allergy testing, as appropriate
   Patients who get second-line drugs are more likely to have side effects and treatment failure

5. Talk about prevention
   Avoid the need for antibiotics by encouraging:
   - Hand washing
   - Vaccination
   - Cough/sneeze into a sleeve