

# Pediatric antibiotic prescribing dropped during pandemic

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(HealthDay)—In pediatric primary care practices, there was a substantial

reduction in antibiotic prescribing, beginning in April 2020, which was mainly due to a reduction in prescriptions at visits for respiratory tract infection (RTI), according to a study published online Jan. 10 in *Pediatrics*.

Lauren Dutcher, M.D., from the University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine in Philadelphia, and colleagues conducted a retrospective observational study to examine the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and associated [public health measures](#) on [antibiotic prescribing](#) in pediatric primary care practices. Encounters were included from Jan. 1, 2018, through June 30, 2021.

The researchers found that from April to December 2019, there were 69,327 total antibiotic prescriptions compared with 18,935 during the same months in 2020, representing a 72.7 percent reduction. Overall, 87.3 percent of this decrease was due to a reduction in prescriptions at visits for RTI. In April 2020, overall antibiotic prescriptions decreased from 31.6 to 6.4 prescriptions per 1,000 patients. This was followed by a nonsignificant monthly increase in prescriptions, with a rebound in prescribing from April to June 2020. There was also an immediate decrease seen in encounter volume; overall encounter volume recovery started quickly, but RTI encounter volume rebounded more slowly.

"Future studies should examine changes in antibiotic prescribing with relaxation of social distancing and authorization of COVID-19 vaccination for children, as well as the impact on [antibiotic resistance](#) and other antibiotic-related adverse effects," the authors write.

**More information:** [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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