Antibiotic Concerns

Each of these statements describes a potentially inappropriate use of antibiotics. How would you persuade people to eliminate unnecessary use of antibiotics in these cases?

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Statement 1

In response to pressure from patients to “give me something” some doctors prescribe antibiotics before they know whether a patient’s illness is caused by a virus or bacteria.

Statement 2

Antibiotics are widely used in livestock feed to improve the growth of animals.

Statement 3

A popular marketing strategy for some products intended for healthy people (for example, hand soaps and children’s toys) is to include antibacterial drugs in the products.

Measles Outbreak at Western High

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Read the following story about some students at Western High.

It began with Naoko Yomata. She and her family had just moved when she started the second half of her junior year at Western High in a small town in Washington state. One week into the semester, she had a sore throat, felt exhausted, and developed a fever of 102 degrees Fahrenheit. Soon she had a red rash all over her body – measles.

Ten days later, Caleb Miller and Jessica Johnson came down with measles. These students were in Naoko’s biology class and Jessica was her lab partner. The following week, a sophomore, Michael Chen, had measles and so did the students’ biology teacher, Ms. Baker.

The local public health officer was alarmed. Western High hadn’t had a case of measles in 10 years, and now there were five cases in less than a month.

Read the rest of the story about the measles outbreak at Western High and answer the question that ends it.

A little sleuthing revealed the following:

Naoko had just arrived in the United States from her home country, Japan, where she apparently contracted measles. She had not been vaccinated as a child. Caleb was also susceptible to measles because his parents had objected to vaccinations. Jessica and Michael were vaccinated when they were 15 and 18 months old, respectively, but they had missed the required “booster shot” during elementary school.

Ms. Baker was vaccinated in 1966 when she was 5 years old. Later studies showed that the initial “killed measles” vaccine was not very effective compared with the currently used “live measles” vaccine, first available in 1968. Ms. Baker was unaware that her vaccination was not effective or that she needed a booster shot.

The results of the public health officer’s detective work explained why Naoko, Caleb, Jessica, Michael and Ms Baker got the measles. But there is another question:

In the 1950s and 1960s (before the measles vaccine was developed), most people got this disease as preschool children or as elementary school students. Why didn’t the unvaccinated or inadequately vaccinated students and teacher at Western High get measles when they were children, rather than now, as teenagers or adults?