

What to do if you have a cough

When you have a cough, sore throat, or other illness:

- Tell your doctor you only want an antibiotic if it is really necessary.
- If you are not prescribed an antibiotic, ask what you can do to feel better and get relief from your symptoms.



www.cdc.gov/getsmart

CDC's Get Smart Campaign

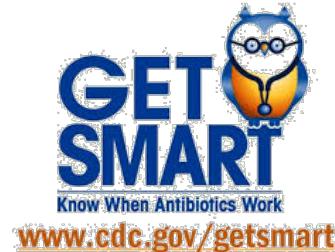
Get Smart for Healthcare is a CDC campaign focused on improving prescribing practices in inpatient healthcare facilities.

The more that antibiotics are used today, the less likely they will still be effective in the future.

To feel better when you or your child has a viral infection:

- Ask your healthcare professional about over-the-counter treatment options that may help reduce symptoms.
- Drink more fluids.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Use a cool-mist vaporizer or saline nasal spray to relieve congestion.
- Soothe your throat with crushed ice, sore throat spray, or lozenges. (Do not give lozenges to young children.)
- Use honey to relieve cough. (Do not give honey to an infant under one year of age.)
- If you are diagnosed with the flu, there are flu antiviral drugs that can be used to treat flu illness.

Antibiotics are not necessary for viruses such as colds, sore throats, and the flu as these illnesses do not respond to antibiotics. Antibiotics only fight infections caused by bacteria.



Preserving and Improving Antibiotic Use and Efficiency in the Community we Serve.



**ANTIBIOTICS
&
YOUR
HEALTH**

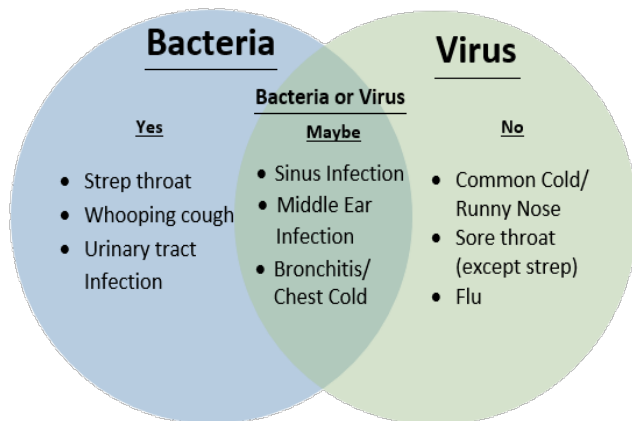
What are Antibiotics?

An antibiotic is a type of drug that kills or stops the growth of bacteria. Examples include penicillin and ciprofloxacin. Antibiotics are for bacterial infections only, not viruses. Every year, antibiotic-resistant infections have caused 2,049,442 illnesses and 23,000 deaths.

Antibiotic Resistance

Antibiotic resistance occurs when germs outsmart drugs. Poor practices introduce unnecessary side effects, allergic reactions, and serious diarrheal infections caused by *Clostridium difficile*. These complications of antibiotic therapy can have serious outcomes, even death. Doctors and other health professionals around the world are increasingly adopting the principles of responsible antibiotic use, often called antibiotic stewardship with the commitment to always use antibiotics only when they are necessary to treat and prevent disease.

Are Antibiotics Necessary?



Why Antibiotics are prescribed when not necessary:

- Patient belief that antibiotics are more likely to cure an infection even if it is not recommended.
- Clinician perception of patient expectations for antibiotics.
- Clinician concern about patient satisfaction with clinical visits when antibiotics are not subscribed.

What can you do?

- Do not ask for antibiotics when your doctor thinks you do not need them. Remember antibiotics have side effects.
- Ask if tests will be done to make sure the right antibiotic is prescribed.
- Take antibiotics exactly as the doctor prescribes. Do not skip doses. Complete the prescribed course of treatment, even when you start feeling better.
- Only take antibiotics prescribed for you; do not share or use leftover antibiotics. Antibiotics treat specific types of infections. Taking the wrong medicine may delay correct treatment and allow bacteria to multiply.
- Do not save antibiotics for the next illness. Discard any leftover medication once the prescribed course of treatment is completed.

INFORMATION FROM:

www.cdc.gov
www.who.int

Questions to Ask:

WHAT IS THE BEST TREATMENT FOR THE ILLNESS?

- Antibiotics are not necessary for viruses such as colds, sore throats, and the flu as these illnesses do not respond to antibiotics.

IS THIS THE RIGHT ANTIBIOTICS FOR THE INFECTION?

- If an antibiotic is necessary, it is important to use an antibiotic that is designed to fight the bacteria that is causing the illness. Ask your provider if the antibiotic is the most “targeted” to treat infection while causing the least side effect.

WHAT CAN I DO TO FEEL BETTER?

- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist what symptom relief is best.



It is estimated that more than half of antibiotics are unnecessarily prescribed to children in doctor office settings for cough and cold illness, most of which are caused by viruses.

