

## What To Do if You Have a Cough

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

- Tell your medical professional you want an antibiotic only 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.



### CDC's Be Antibiotics Aware Campaign

Be Antibiotics Aware is a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention campaign focused on improving proper antibiotic use in inpatient healthcare facilities.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use](http://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use)

*Antibiotics will not work in the future the more we use them today.*

## To Feel Better When You or Your Child Has a Viral Infection

- Ask your medical professional about over-the-counter treatment options to help treat symptoms.
- Drink more of 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 infants under one year of age).
- If you are diagnosed with the flu, antiviral medications can be used to treat flu illness.

*Antibiotics only fight infections caused by bacteria.*

*Antibiotics do not cure colds, sore throats or the flu because they are caused by viruses.*



*Preserving and Improving Antibiotic Use and Efficiency in the Community We Serve.*



**ANTIBIOTICS  
&  
YOUR  
HEALTH**

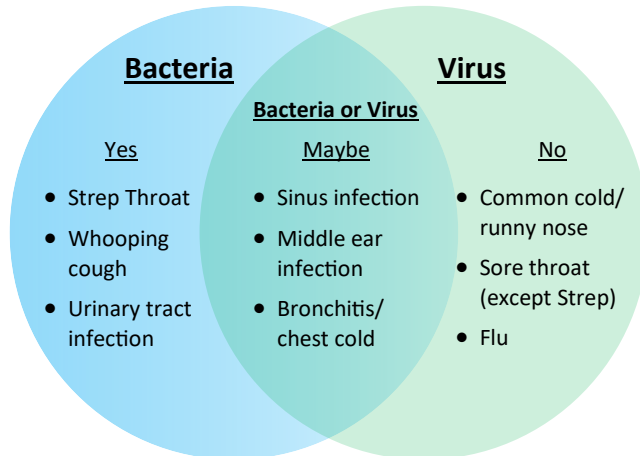
## What are Antibiotics?

Antibiotics are medications that kill bacteria. Examples include penicillin and ciprofloxacin. Antibiotics are for bacterial infections only, not viruses. Every year, antibiotic-resistant infections cause over 2 million illnesses and 23,000 deaths.

## Antibiotic Resistance

Antibiotic resistance means antibiotics cannot kill bacteria anymore. Unnecessary antibiotics can cause side effects, allergic reactions and serious diarrheal infections called *Clostridium difficile* infection, also known as C. diff. Complications from antibiotic use can have serious effects, even death. One way to prevent antibiotic resistance is for healthcare professionals to prescribe them only when necessary. Antibiotic Stewardship is a program used worldwide that makes sure antibiotics are used only when needed so they work in the future.

## Are Antibiotics Necessary?



## Why are Antibiotics Prescribed When Not Necessary?

- Patients believe antibiotics will cure infections even if they are not recommended.
- Healthcare professionals believe patients expect to receive antibiotics.
- Healthcare professionals worry about patient satisfaction when antibiotics are not prescribed.

## What Can You Do?

- Do not ask for antibiotics when your healthcare professional does not think you need them. Antibiotics have side effects.
- Ask if tests will be done to make sure the right antibiotic is prescribed.
- Take antibiotics exactly as prescribed. Do not skip doses. Finish all of the antibiotic even if you feel better.
- Only take medications that are for you. Do not share or use leftover antibiotics. Antibiotics treat specific types of infections. Taking the wrong medicine may not treat your infection and allow bacteria to grow.
- Do not save leftover antibiotics for another illness. Throw away leftover medication when you are done with the prescribed course.
- Wash your hands, cover your cough, stay home when sick and get recommended vaccines to prevent spreading infections.



Clean Hands



Cover Coughs



Stay Home When Sick



Get Recommended Vaccines

## QUESTIONS TO ASK

What is the best treatment for the illness?

- Antibiotics do not work for viruses, such as colds, sore throats and the flu.
- Antibiotics do not cure these illnesses.
- Is this the right antibiotic for the infection?
- Each antibiotic fights specific bacteria and treats a specific infection.
- If an antibiotic is necessary, it is important to use the antibiotic that fights that specific infection.
- Ask your healthcare professional if it is the most “targeted” antibiotic with the least side effects.

What can I do to feel better?

- Ask your healthcare professional or pharmacist how to best relieve symptoms.



### SAY YES TO ANTIBIOTICS

when needed for certain infections caused by **bacteria**.



### SAY NO TO ANTIBIOTICS

for **viruses** such as colds and flu, or runny noses, even if the mucus is thick, yellow or green. Antibiotics also won't help for some common bacterial infections including most cases of bronchitis, many sinus infections, and some ear infections.

*It is estimated that more than half of antibiotics prescribed to children in doctors' offices for coughs and colds are not necessary because they are mostly caused by viruses.*

INFORMATION FROM:

[www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov)  
[www.who.int](http://www.who.int)