

Antibiotic resistance

How incorrect use of antibiotics can
make them less effective when really needed



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Antibiotic resistance

What are antibiotics?

Antibiotics are medicines that are used to treat or prevent infections. They work by killing or stopping the growth of bacteria that may be causing a problem in your body.

Antibiotics are strong medicines, but they don't cure everything



Antibiotics aren't always the answer

Most illnesses are caused by two kinds of germs: bacteria or viruses. Antibiotics can cure bacterial infections only – they cannot cure viral infections.

- Bacteria cause strep throat, some types of pneumonia and sinus infections.
- Viruses cause the common colds, most coughs and the flu.

Using antibiotics for a viral illness:

- Will NOT cure the infection.
- Will NOT help you feel better.
- Will NOT keep others from catching your illness.

What is antibiotic resistance?

- When bacteria develop new ways to defend against antibiotics, it is called 'antibiotic resistance'. This means that an antibiotic which used to be effective may no longer be able to treat your infection.
- One of the main causes of antibiotic resistance is antibiotics being used when they are not needed (e.g. for a common cold or flu). When you are in hospital, your doctor will decide whether you need antibiotics based on your symptoms and test results.

YOU DO NOT NEED ANTIBIOTICS FOR:



Most coughs and
bronchitis



Most ear
aches



Colds or Flu



Runny noses



Sore throat not caused
by bacteria

Make sure you take antibiotics responsibly

When you receive a prescription for antibiotics, you must follow the doctor's instructions in order to minimize the risk of developing resistant bacteria.

If you do not follow the instructions correctly, for example if you shorten the length of time of treatment, if you take a lower dose, or if you do not take the antibiotics at the correct time interval prescribed by your doctor, bacteria can become resistant to antibiotics. Resistant bacteria can stay with you and can also be passed on to others. This may put you and others at risk of not responding to antibiotics next time you need them.

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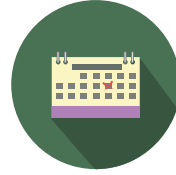
Remember



Inform your physician of any allergies you have prior to receiving any antibiotics.



Women should inform their doctor if they are pregnant.



Be sure to take the complete course of antibiotics prescribed according to the physician's instructions even if you feel better.



Never take antibiotics prescribed for someone else.



Do not reuse any of your old prescriptions.



Discuss side effects, food/alcohol interactions with your physician.



Store antibiotics properly as instructed.