

SpeakUp™: Antibiotics

Know the facts

- Antibiotics are life-saving drugs when used wisely.
- Antibiotics treat infections caused by bacteria. They do not work on viruses that cause colds and flu.
- Each year, almost 2 million people in the U.S. become infected with bacteria that antibiotics can't treat. These bacteria no longer respond to antibiotics. At least 23,000 people die each year from these infections.
- A reaction to an antibiotic may require a visit to the ER, especially for kids.
- Antibiotics also kill good bacteria in your body. This may lead to other problems like diarrhea or yeast infections.

life-saving

treat infections

use wisely

When do you really need an antibiotic?

Antibiotics are powerful drugs for fighting infections. They don't work for every sickness. This chart shows when you may be given an antibiotic.

Illness	Virus	Bacteria	Should you expect an antibiotic?
Bronchitis (in healthy children and adults)	✓	✓	May be recommended
Cold or runny nose	✓		No
Ear infection	✓	✓	May be recommended
Flu	✓		No
Fluid in the middle ear	✓		No
Sinus infection	✓	✓	May be recommended
Sore throat (except strep)	✓		No
Strep throat		✓	Yes
Urinary tract infection		✓	Yes

Information available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website

Questions to ask when you are given an antibiotic:



- Why do you need it?
- What kind of infection do you have? Is this the best drug for it?
- How long should you take it?
- Will you get better without it?
- What are the side effects?
- Will it interact with other drugs?
- How and when should you take it?



Antibiotic do's and don'ts

Do



- Take it exactly as your health care provider says
- Take only the drugs prescribed for you
- Prevent infections by washing your hands and getting vaccinated



Don't

- Skip doses
- Share the drugs with others
- Insist on an antibiotic if your health care provider doesn't think you should have one

Taking antibiotics when you don't need them doesn't make sense!

- How you use antibiotics today will affect how well the drugs work tomorrow for everyone.
- It takes many years to develop new antibiotics. We need to improve the use of the drugs currently available.
- One of the world's biggest health threats is from bacterial infections that no longer respond to antibiotics. Everyone must work together to use antibiotics wisely.

