

Bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics are harder to treat and some can't be treated at all. About 2.8 million people get sick and 35,000 people die each year in the US because of antibiotic-resistant infections.

Do not pressure your healthcare provider to prescribe an antibiotic unless they feel your infection is caused by bacteria.

If you are prescribed an antibiotic...

- Take it exactly as your healthcare provider tells you
- Do not skip doses
- Do not share it with others
- Do not save it for later
- Talk to your pharmacist about safely discarding leftover medicine



Here are some other things you can do to stay healthy so you may not need antibiotics:

- Wash your hands often with plain soap and water, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds. Soap and water is more effective than alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Always wash your hands after coughing or sneezing, before preparing food or eating food, and after using the toilet.
- Get immunized! Talk to your healthcare provider about which vaccines are appropriate for you.

For more information and materials please visit:

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Antibiotics

What you should know



Antibiotics are powerful medicines. They kill bacteria or stop them from growing.

- Antibiotics only treat bacterial infections.
- Viral illnesses cannot be treated with antibiotics.
- Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for tips and over-the-counter medications to help relieve your symptoms.

Antibiotics cannot fight infections caused by viruses like COVID, colds and flu.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

Antibiotics kill good bacteria in your body which can lead to side effects such as diarrhea or yeast infections.

A “broad spectrum” antibiotic kills a wider range of bacteria than a “narrow spectrum” antibiotic.

Talk to your healthcare provider about the risks and how to limit them.

- **Do not pressure your healthcare provider to prescribe an antibiotic unless they feel your infection is caused by bacteria.**

- Tell your healthcare provider that you are concerned about antibiotic resistance and ask:

- Can my infection be treated with a “narrow spectrum” antibiotic?

- Can my infection be treated with fewer doses of antibiotic?

What’s got you sick?	Common Cause			Are antibiotics needed?
	Bacteria	Bacteria or Virus	Virus	
Mononucleosis (“mono”)			✓	No
Strep throat	✓			Yes
Sore throat (except strep)			✓	No
Sexually transmitted diseases (“STDs”)		✓		Maybe
Whooping cough	✓			Yes
Urinary tract infection	✓			Yes
Sinus infection		✓		Maybe
Herpes/Cold sore			✓	No
Bronchitis/chest cold (in an otherwise healthy person)*		✓		No
Common cold/runny nose			✓	No
Flu			✓	No

* In some cases, acute bronchitis is caused by bacteria, but even in these cases antibiotics still do not help