



TIP OF THE WEEK

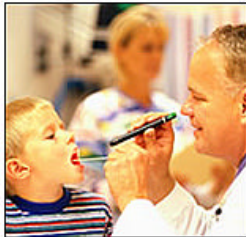
If You Have a Cold or Flu, Antibiotics Won't Work For You!



Colds and flu are caused by viruses. Taking antibiotics when you have a virus may do more harm than good. Get smart about when antibiotics are appropriate.

Dangers of Antibiotic Resistance

Antibiotic resistance is one of the world's most pressing public health problems. Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria change in some way that reduces or eliminates the effectiveness of drugs, chemicals, or other agents designed to cure or prevent infections. Widespread inappropriate use of antibiotics is fueling an increase in antibiotic-resistant bacteria. So the next time you really need an antibiotic for a bacterial infection, it may not work.



Antibiotics Are Not for Colds and Flu

Taking antibiotics for viral infections — such as a cold, cough, the flu, and acute bronchitis —

- Will **not** cure the infection
- Will **not** keep other individuals from catching the illness
- Will **not** help a person feel better
- May cause an unnecessary harmful side effect

What Not To Do

- Do not demand antibiotics when a healthcare provider says they are not needed. They will not help treat your infection.
- Do not take an antibiotic for a viral infection like a cold, a cough, or the flu.
- When you are prescribed an antibiotic:
 - Do not skip doses.
 - Do not save any antibiotics for the next time you get sick.
 - Do not take antibiotics prescribed for someone else. The antibiotic may not be appropriate for your illness. Taking the wrong medicine may delay correct treatment and allow bacteria to multiply.



What To Do

- Prevent the spread of infections through frequent hand washing.
- When you are prescribed an antibiotic:
 - Take it exactly as the healthcare provider tells you. Complete the prescribed course even if you are feeling better. If treatment stops too soon, some bacteria may survive and re-infect you.
- Talk with your healthcare provider about antibiotic resistance.

For more information from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention please visit www.cdc.gov/Features/GetSmart/index.html