

ASK YOUR PHARMACIST

Your pharmacist is your medication expert and can provide advice and information on a wide range of health issues

Using Antibiotics Wisely



What are Antibiotics?

Antibiotics are medicines used to treat bacterial infections ranging from strep throat, pneumonia and acne to meningitis and tuberculosis. Antibiotics kill or harm bacteria, but they do not treat viruses.

Why Didn't My Doctor Prescribe an Antibiotic for Me?

If your illness is diagnosed as a cold or flu, you should get better without an antibiotic. Ninety per cent of colds and flus, and the cough, sore throat, aches and pains that go with them, are caused by viruses. Antibiotics won't help! An ordinary cold or flu virus will run its course in a week or so. Rest, lots of fluids, and remedies for cold or flu symptoms can help you feel better.

What is Antibiotic Resistance?

Infections caused by resistant bacteria are a serious public health concern. Bacteria are smart — they are always changing to try to resist antibiotics that can kill them. If bacteria become resistant, antibiotics

that once killed them no longer work. Using antibiotics correctly is the best way to make sure that they will work in treating infections when we really need them.

The Do's and Don'ts of Antibiotics

DO talk to your doctor and pharmacist about how to take antibiotics: how often, for how long, with or without food. Discuss when you should expect to feel better and what side effects may occur.

DO take all of your antibiotics even though you may feel better after a couple of days. If you don't finish, all the bacteria may not be killed and you may get sick again. The stronger bacteria can survive and become resistant, causing infections that are harder to treat.

DO report any drug allergies you have to your doctor and pharmacist. Also, make sure they know about all the medicines you are taking (prescription, nonprescription and herbal products).

DON'T insist that your doctor prescribe an antibiotic

They don't work against a cold, flu, or other viral infections.

DON'T share other people's antibiotics. Use only those prescribed for your current illness.

DON'T ignore unexpected side effects — tell your doctor or pharmacist about them.

DON'T worry about taking antibiotics when you really need them. Sometimes your own natural defences can fail and you need antibiotics. They won't decrease your natural immunity to infections.

***Antibiotics save lives.
Take them wisely.
Don't take them for granted.***