

Antibiotics Aren't Always the Answer

Five Fast Facts About Antibiotics



5 FAST FACTS

1**Antibiotics only treat infections caused by bacteria.**

Viruses cause infections like a cold. If you have a cough, nasal congestion or sore throat, talk to your provider or pharmacist about ways to help you feel better.

2**Most sore throats DO NOT require an antibiotic.**

Only 1 in 6 people who see their provider for a sore throat have strep throat. Your provider can test to see if you have strep throat, and will prescribe an antibiotic if you do.

3**If you have green colored mucus, you MAY NOT need an antibiotic.**

As your body's immune system fights an infection, mucus can change color. This is normal and does not always mean you need an antibiotic.

4**All prescription drugs have potential risks.**

Using antibiotics can cause problems ranging from an upset stomach to serious allergic reactions and can also make the medicine less likely to work in the future.

5**Using the right antibiotic at the right time can save your life.**

Take antibiotics only if your provider says you need them.



Viruses cause most coughs and colds. Antibiotics do not treat viruses.

Take antibiotics only if your provider says you need them.

Viruses Cause These Common Illnesses:

- Colds
- Influenza (the flu)
- Runny noses
- Most coughs
- Most bronchitis
- Most sore throats
- Most sinus infections

Taking Antibiotics for Viral Illnesses:

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



Using Antibiotics Can:

- Kill good bacteria in your body. This may lead to problems like diarrhea or yeast infections.
- Cause a serious allergic reaction that may require a stay in the hospital.

Antibiotics WILL NOT treat viral illnesses. They will go away on their own in a week or two.

Talk with your provider or pharmacist about the best way to care for your illness.

Please call _____ with any questions or concerns.

Veterans Crisis Line

1-800-273-TALK (8255) or Text - 838255