

FactSheet

Para Su Información

Know the Proper Use of Antibiotics

Are you aware that colds, flu, most sore throats and bronchitis are caused by viruses? Did you know that antibiotics do not fight viruses? It's true. Plus, taking antibiotics when you have a virus may do more harm than good. Taking antibiotics when they are not needed increases your risk of getting an infection later that resists antibiotic treatment. Widespread overuse and inappropriate use are fueling an increase in antibiotic-resistant bacteria. In the U.S., antibiotic resistant infections are responsible for \$20 billion in excess health care costs.

If you have a cold or flu, antibiotics won't work

Use the chart below to know which common illnesses are usually viral or bacterial and when antibiotics are necessary.

Illness	Usual Cause		Antibiotic Needed
	Virus	Bacteria	
Cold	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Flu	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Chest Cold (in otherwise healthy children and adults)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Sore Throats (except strep)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Bronchitis (in otherwise healthy children and adults)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Runny Nose (with green or yellow mucus)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
Fluid in the Middle Ear (otitis media with effusion)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	No

Antibiotics cure bacterial infections, not viral infections such as colds or flu, most coughs and bronchitis, sore throats not caused by strep and runny noses.

Taking antibiotics for viral infections, such as a cold, cough, the flu, or most bronchitis, will **NOT**:

- Cure infections

- Keep other individuals from catching the illness
- Help you feel better

How do you protect yourself or your child?

When you use antibiotics appropriately, you do the best for your health, your family's health and the health of those around you. Be sure to discuss antibiotic awareness with your doctor.

When you are prescribed an antibiotic:

- Take it exactly as the doctor 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.
- Make sure your children take all medication as prescribed, even if they feel better.
- Finish all medication as prescribed. Do not keep the medication to be used later. If you have leftover medication, dispose of it properly. Many Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department substations offer drop-boxes for unused or expired medication. Do not flush unused medications or spill them into the drain. Go to www.SNHD.info for disposal tips.

For more information about antibiotics, talk to your doctor or visit the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/getsmart.



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