

Using antibiotics for a virus:

- ◆ Will **NOT** cure you.
- ◆ Will **NOT** help you feel better.
- ◆ Will **NOT** stop others from getting sick.

For more information visit:

www.nj.gov/health/cd/mrsa

or call

1-800-367-6543

**NJDHSS Communicable
Disease Service**

Special thanks to the
Washington State Department of Health.

**Do you really
need**



Antibiotics?

Antibiotics:

To use or not to use?

Many illnesses are caused by two types of germs: bacteria or viruses. While both types of germs can produce similar illnesses, care for each is very different.

When do antibiotics help?

Antibiotics can be helpful in killing harmful bacteria. But antibiotics cannot kill viruses and will not stop you from catching or spreading illnesses caused by viruses, like cold or flu. If your doctor prescribes antibiotics, follow the directions on the label and take all the pills in the container.

What happens when antibiotics are used when not needed?

Over time, bacteria can change to resist the effects of antibiotics. Taking antibiotics for sicknesses caused by viruses won't help you get better, but can cause harm. Taking antibiotics when not needed increases the chance of making bacteria stronger against drugs that may help against infection.

**Do I need to take
antibiotics for my
illness?**

| Sickness | Needs Antibiotics? |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Bronchitis | NO |
| Cold | NO |
| Flu | NO |
| Green or yellow mucus | NO |
| Sore throat (except strep throat) | NO |
| Ear Infection | Sometimes |

Talk to your doctor before taking medication:

- ◆ If you are currently taking any other medications or supplements (prescription, over-the-counter, and herbal).
- ◆ If your child is 6 years old or younger (Many over-the-counter medications are not recommended for children younger than six).
- ◆ If you are pregnant or breastfeeding.

Taking antibiotics the wrong way can result in:

- ◆ Longer illness.
- ◆ Higher costs.
- ◆ More doctor visits.
- ◆ More serious infections that are harder to treat.

Feeling poorly? What you can do to feel better.

| Problem | Home Remedy | Over the counter medicines |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| Body Pains, Headache, or Fever | Apply a damp towel to your forehead. Get lots of rest. | Acetaminophen Ibuprofen Naproxen |
| Ear Pain | Apply a warm compress to the ear which is causing pain. Drink lots of liquids. Get lots of rest. | Acetaminophen Ibuprofen |
| Sore Throat | Gargle with warm salt water. Avoid cigarette smoke. Eat ice chips. | Cough drops Menthol Benzocaine |
| Sneezing | Avoid things which irritate or trigger allergies. | Antihistamines such as: Diphenhydramine Loratadine Cetirizine |
| Dry Cough | Drink lots of liquids. Use a humidifier. Gargle with warm salt water. | Dextromethorphan |
| Wet Cough | Drink lots of liquids. | Guaifenesin |
| Stuffy Nose | Use a humidifier. Use saline nose drops or spray. | Decongestants such as: Pseudoephedrine Phenylephrine Oxymetazoline |
| Runny Nose | Apply petroleum jelly or medicated salves to irritated skin on the nose. Use soft tissues to avoid irritation. | Antihistamines such as: Diphenhydramine Loratadine Cetirizine |