

# Antibiotics

Antibiotics are medicines that are used to treat infections caused by bacteria. Like all medicines, antibiotics can cause unwanted effects if they are misused. **Never take antibiotics on your own**, always consult your doctor for treatment advice.



## Do antibiotics work against all infections?

No, they only work against infections caused by bacteria. We know that most infections are caused by viruses and antibiotics are completely useless against them. We should not take antibiotics for viral infections such as colds, flu, pharyngitis and otitis.

## What happens when you take too many antibiotics or you use them the wrong way?

In the first place, side effects such as diarrhea, mouth sores, allergic reactions, skin rash or vaginal discomfort may occur. They are difficult to predict as they depend on the individual.

Secondly, improper use causes bacteria to become resistant to antibiotics. The antibiotic no longer kills the bacteria.

## How do I know if I need an antibiotic when I have an infection?

Most infections are caused by viruses:

**Colds, pharyngitis and flu.** They are always caused by viruses. Drink plenty of fluids. You can take some medicines if you are feeling achy and feverish or if you have a cough or mucus.

**Sore throat.** Most are caused by viruses. Sometimes they are triggered by bacteria and cause a high fever with no cough or mucus. In this case your doctor will prescribe an antibiotic.

**Bronchitis or cough.** These are almost always caused by viruses. Take some cough medicine. If the fever persists for more than five days, you should see your doctor. It's another matter if you suffer from chronic bronchitis, then you will need to consult your doctor right from the start.

**Diarrhea.** It is almost always caused by viruses. Do not use any medicine or antibiotic to stop the diarrhea. The most important thing is to drink liquids to compensate for the fluid loss and watch what you eat.

**Urine infection.** You need to take antibiotics, always consult your doctor.

## What I can do to use antibiotics properly?

Do not buy antibiotics without a prescription.

Do not take them without consulting the doctor.

If your doctor prescribes an antibiotic, you should take it at the times you have been told to take it, and you should not stop taking it early.

Remember that most infections clear up on their own without antibiotics.