

Viruses or Bacteria

What's got you sick?

Antibiotics are only needed for treating certain infections caused by bacteria. Viral illnesses cannot be treated with antibiotics. When an antibiotic is not prescribed, ask your healthcare professional for tips on how to relieve symptoms and feel better.

Common Condition	Common Cause			Are Antibiotics Needed?
	Bacteria	Bacteria or Virus	Virus	
Strep throat	✓			Yes
Whooping cough	✓			Yes
Urinary tract infection	✓			Yes
Sinus infection		✓		Maybe
Middle ear infection		✓		Maybe
Bronchitis/chest cold (in otherwise healthy children and adults)*		✓		No*
Common cold/runny nose			✓	No
Sore throat (except strep)			✓	No
Flu			✓	No

* Studies show that in otherwise healthy children and adults, antibiotics for bronchitis won't help you feel better.



**BE
ANTIBIOTICS
AWARE**

SMART USE, BEST CARE

To learn more about antibiotic prescribing and use, visit www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use.



DO YOU NEED ANTIBIOTICS?



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You feel sick and miserable and want to get better fast. It could be a cold or even the flu. You're probably thinking you need antibiotics to knock out your illness and help you feel better. **Not so fast!** When antibiotics aren't needed, they won't help you, and the side effects could still hurt you.

8 WAYS TO BE ANTIBIOTICS AWARE

1 Antibiotics save lives, but they aren't always the answer when you're sick.

2 Antibiotics do not work on viruses.

3 Antibiotics are only needed for treating certain infections caused by bacteria.

4 An antibiotic will **NOT** make you feel better if you have a virus.

5 Any time antibiotics are used, they can cause side effects.

6 Taking antibiotics creates resistant bacteria.

7 If you need antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed.

8 Stay healthy: clean hands, cover coughs, and get vaccinated, for the flu, for example.

Talk to your healthcare professional about the best way to feel better.

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