**Know the facts**

- Antibiotics are life-saving drugs when used wisely.
- Antibiotics treat infections caused by bacteria. They do not work on viruses that cause colds and flu.
- Each year, almost 2 million people in the U.S. become infected with bacteria that antibiotics can’t treat. These bacteria no longer respond to antibiotics. At least 23,000 people die each year from these infections.
- A reaction to an antibiotic may require a visit to the ER, especially for kids.
- Antibiotics also kill good bacteria in your body. This may lead to other problems like diarrhea or yeast infections.

**When do you really need an antibiotic?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Illness</th>
<th>Virus</th>
<th>Bacteria</th>
<th>Should you expect an antibiotic?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bronchitis (in healthy children and adults)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>May be recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold or runny nose</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ear infection</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>May be recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flu</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluid in the middle ear</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sinus infection</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>May be recommended</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sore throat (except strep)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strep throat</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urinary tract infection</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Information available on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website

**Questions to ask when you are given an antibiotic:**

- Why do you need it?
- What kind of infection do you have? Is this the best drug for it?
- How long should you take it?
- Will you get better without it?
- What are the side effects?
- Will it interact with other drugs?
- How and when should you take it?

**Antibiotic do’s and don’ts**

**Do**

- Take it exactly as your health care provider says
- Take only the drugs prescribed for you
- Prevent infections by washing your hands and getting vaccinated

**Don’t**

- Skip doses
- Share the drugs with others
- Insist on an antibiotic if your health care provider doesn’t think you should have one

**Taking antibiotics when you don’t need them doesn’t make sense!**

- How you use antibiotics today will affect how well the drugs work tomorrow for everyone.
- It takes many years to develop new antibiotics. We need to improve the use of the drugs currently available.
- One of the world’s biggest health threats is from bacterial infections that no longer respond to antibiotics. Everyone must work together to use antibiotics wisely.

*For more information*

- Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

*The goal of Speak Up™ is to help patients and their advocates become active in their care.*