

Do Antibiotics Have Side Effects?

Anytime antibiotics are used, they can cause side effects. While antibiotics are effective for some illnesses, they are not always necessary. When antibiotics are not needed, they will not help you, and the side effects could still hurt you. Common side effects of antibiotics can include:



Rash



Dizziness



Nausea



Yeast Infection



Diarrhea

1 out of 5 medication-related visits to the ED are from reactions to antibiotics.

Viruses or Bacteria What's Got You Sick?

Here is a chart of common illnesses. Talk to your doctor if you think you have one of these.

Illness	Bacteria	Bacteria or Virus	Virus	Are antibiotics needed?
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

For more information, visit:

1. www.maine.gov/dhhs/mecdc/infectious-disease/hai/index.shtml
2. www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use

Material adapted from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's "Antibiotics Aware" campaign with permission

Antibiotic Use: What You Need to Know



Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
Healthcare Epidemiology Program

Do I Really Need Antibiotics?



SAY YES TO ANTIBIOTICS

when needed for certain infections caused by **bacteria**.



SAY NO TO ANTIBIOTICS

for **viruses**, such as colds and flu, or runny noses, even if the mucus is thick, yellow or green.

Antibiotics do NOT work on viruses.

- Antibiotics only treat bacterial infections.
- Viral illnesses cannot be treated with antibiotics.
- When an antibiotic is not prescribed, ask your doctor for tips on how to feel better.
- See the chart on the back of this brochure to find out if your illness may be caused by a virus or bacteria.

Can I Feel Better Without Antibiotics?

Respiratory viruses usually go away in a week or two without treatment. To stay healthy and keep others healthy, you can:



Wash Your Hands



Cover Your Cough



Stay Home When you are Sick



Get the Recommended Vaccines

What are Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria?

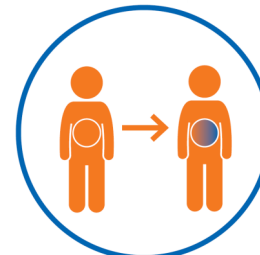
- Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria no longer respond to the drugs designed to kill them.
- When a bacteria is exposed to an antibiotic, the bacteria start to build defenses that can cause antibiotic resistance.
- Anytime antibiotics are used, they can cause antibiotic resistance.



Bacteria become resistant to the antibiotics designed to kill them.



When bacteria become resistant, antibiotics cannot fight them, and the bacteria multiply.



Some resistant bacteria are hard to treat and can spread to other people.