

What is antibiotic resistance?



Antibiotic resistance happens when bacteria change in a way that the antibiotics that used to treat them are less effective or not effective at all. As a result, stronger, more expensive antibiotics are needed to kill the same bacteria. People who develop antibiotic-resistant infections are more likely to need treatment in a hospital and are at increased risk for death. Using antibiotics the wrong way contributes to the rise in antibiotic-resistant infections.

How do I use antibiotics the right way?

Antibiotics treat infections caused by bacteria, not viruses. Do not ask for antibiotics for symptoms of colds and flu. These illnesses are caused by viruses. Often, antibiotics are not needed for ear infections, sore throats, and sinus infections because these can be viral infections, too.

If your doctor does prescribe an antibiotic, take it as prescribed. Do not skip doses. Take the entire course to make sure that no pesky bacteria linger because this can lead to a more serious infection.

Source: Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology. Read more at www.cdc.gov/getsmart/.