Antibiotic Medication

Antibiotics are among the most frequently prescribed medicines. Antibiotics cure illness by assisting our body to injure or kill the bacteria that cause infection. While antibiotics are useful to treat a wide variety of infections they are useless against viruses. Antibiotics cannot cure colds, flu, or other viral infections.

There are many types of antibiotics available. Your caregiver will decide which antibiotic will be useful for an illness. Never give your child someone else's antibiotics or left over medicine. This may harm your child.

Your caregiver may also take into account:

- Allergies.
- The cost of the medicine.
- Dosing schedules.
- Taste.
- Common side effects when choosing an antibiotic for an infection.

Ask your caregiver if you have questions about why a certain medicine was chosen.

HOW TO TAKE ANTIBIOTICS

Read all instructions and labels on medicine bottles carefully. Some antibiotics should be taken on an empty stomach while others should be taken with food. Taking antibiotics incorrectly may reduce how well they work. Some antibiotics need to be kept in the refrigerator. Others should be kept at room temperature. Ask your caregiver or pharmacist if you do not understand how to give the medicine.

Be sure to give to your child (or take yourself) the amount of medicine your doctor has prescribed. Even if you feel better and your symptoms improve, bacteria may still remain alive in the body. Taking all of the medicine will prevent:

- The infection from returning and becoming harder to treat
- Complications from partially treated infections.

If there is any medicine left over after your child has taken the medicine as your caregiver has instructed, throw the medicine away.

Be sure to tell your doctor if you:

- Are allergic to any medicines.
- Are pregnant or intend to become pregnant while using this medicine.
- Are breastfeeding.
- Are taking any other prescription, non-prescription medicine or herbal remedies.
- Have any other medical conditions or problems you have not already discussed.

If you are taking birth control pills, they may not work while you are on antibiotics. To avoid unwanted pregnancy:

- Continue taking your birth control pills as usual.
- Use a second form of birth control (such as condoms) while you are taking antibiotic medicine.
- When you finish taking the antibiotic medicine, continue using the second form of birth control until you are finished with your current one month cycle of birth control pills.

Try not to miss any doses of medicine. If you miss a dose, take it (give it) as soon as possible. However, if it is almost time for the next dose and the dosing schedule is:

- 2 doses a day, take the missed dose and the next dose 5-6 hours apart.
- 3 or more doses a day, take the missed dose and the next dose 2-4 hours apart, then go back to the normal

schedule.

- If you are unable to make up a missed dose then take the next schedule dose on-time and complete the missed dose at the end of the prescribed time for your medicine.

SIDE EFFECT TO TAKING ANTIOBIOTICS

Common side effects to antibiotics include:

- Soft stools or diarrhea.
- Mild stomach upset.
- Sun sensitivity.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- If your child gets worse or does not get better within a few days of starting the medicine.
- Vomiting develops.
- Diaper rash or rash on the genitals appears.
- Vaginal itching occurs.
- White patches appear on the tongue or in the mouth.
- Severe watery diarrhea and abdominal cramps occur.
- If signs of an allergy develop (trouble breathing, wheezing, hives, unknown itchy rash appears, swelling of the lips, face or tongue, fainting, blisters on the skin or in the mouth) **STOP TAKING THE ANTIBIOTIC**.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Urine turns dark or blood colored.
- Skin turns yellow.
- Easy bruising or bleeding.
- Joint pains or muscle aches occur.
- Fever returns.
- Severe headache.

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