Antibiotic Resistance

Antibiotics are drugs. They fight infections caused by germs (*bacteri*a). Antibiotics greatly reduce illness and death from infectious diseases. Over time, the bacteria that antibiotics once controlled are much harder to kill.

CAUSES

Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria change in some way. These changes can lessen the abilities of drugs designed to cure infections. The over-use of antibiotics can cause antibiotic resistance. Almost all important bacterial infections in the world are becoming resistant to drugs. Antibiotic resistance has been called one of the world's most pressing public health problems.

Antibiotics **should** be used to treat bacterial infections. But they are **not** effective against viral infections. These include the common cold, most sore throats, and the flu. Smart use of antibiotics will control the spread of resistance.

TREATMENT

- Only use antibiotics as prescribed by your caregiver.
- Talk with your caregiver about antibiotic resistance.
- Ask what else you can do to feel better.
- Do not take an antibiotic for a viral infection. This could be a cold, cough or the flu.
- Do not save some of your antibiotic for the next time you get sick.
- Take an antibiotic **exactly** as the doctor tells you.
- Do not take an antibiotic that is prescribed for someone else.
- Use the antibiotic as directed. Take the correct dose at the scheduled time.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF

- Your react to the antibiotic with:
  - A rash.
  - Itching.
  - An upset stomach.

Most of this information courtesy of Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

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