Antibiotic Treatment and Drug Resistance

Antibiotics are very helpful drugs. They are used to treat bacterial infections. But they do not help viral infections. Because antibiotics are used so often, some bacteria do not respond to them.

Respiratory illnesses are mostly caused by viral infections. These will get better without using antibiotics. If an antibiotic is prescribed for a viral illness, a patient may notice bad side effects. Some of these may be:

- Allergic reactions.
- Diarrhea.
- Abdominal discomfort.
- Vomiting.
- Yeast infection.

Antibiotics also can be expensive. Paying for an antibiotic to treat a viral illness is both a medical risk and a waste of money.

The use of antibiotics has fostered the growth of resistant bacteria. These bacteria can cause infections which are harder to treat. For these reasons, doctors are more selective in prescribing antibiotics. **If you have not received an antibiotic today, be sure to follow up as directed if you are not improving.** If you **have** received an antibiotic, take it as directed. Finish the full course. Keep your caregiver informed of any side effects.

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