



Viruses cause common illnesses that antibiotics CANNOT treat like:

- t Colds
- t Influenza (the flu)
- t Runny noses
- t Most coughs
- t Most bronchitis
- t Most sore throats
- t Most sinus infections
- t Some ear infections

Viral illnesses, like colds, usually go away without treatment in a week or two. Even many bacterial ear infections go away by themselves. When an antibiotic is not prescribed, ask your child's doctor if you should take any.



## SIX SIMPLE AND SMART FACTS ABOUT ANTIBIOTIC USE

### 1. Antibiotics are life-saving drugs

Using antibiotics wisely is the best way to preserve their strength for future bacterial illnesses.

### 2. Antibiotics only treat bacterial infections

If your child has a viral infection like a cold, talk to a doctor or pharmacist about symptom relief. This may include over-the-counter medicine, a humidifier, or warm liquids.

### 3. Some ear infections DO NOT require an antibiotic

A doctor can determine what kind of ear infection your child has and if antibiotics will help. The doctor may follow expert guidelines to wait for a couple of days before prescribing antibiotics since your child may get better without them.

### 4. Most sore throats DO NOT require an antibiotic

Only 1 in 5 children seen by a doctor for a sore throat has strep throat, which should be treated with an antibiotic. Your child's doctor can only confirm strep throat by running a test.

### 5. Green colored mucus is NOT a sign that an antibiotic is needed

As the body's immune system fights an infection, mucus can change color. This is normal and does not mean your child needs an antibiotic.

### 6. There are potential risks when taking any prescription drug

Antibiotic use can cause complications, ranging from an upset stomach to a serious allergic reaction. Your child's doctor will weigh the risks and benefits before prescribing an antibiotic.