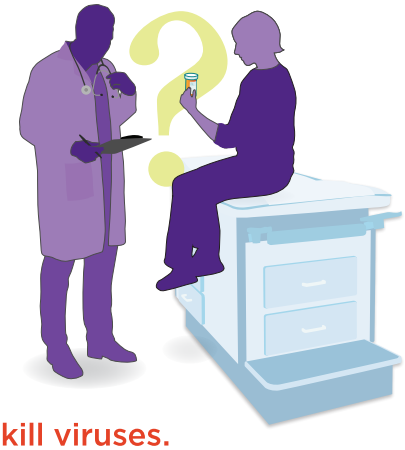
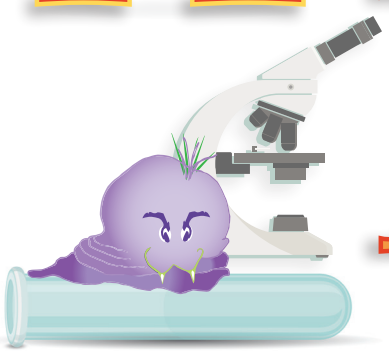
The ABC's of Antibiotics

Ask

"Are these antibiotics necessary?"
"What can I do to feel better?"





Bacteria

Antibiotics do not kill viruses.
They only kill bacteria.

Complete the Course

Take all of your antibiotics *exactly* as prescribed (**even** if you are feeling better).

Do not pressure your healthcare provider for antibiotics.

You do not need antibiotics for:

- ✘ Colds or flu;
- ✘ Most coughs and bronchitis;
- ✘ Sore throats not caused by strep;
- ✘ Runny noses; or
- ✘ Most ear aches.

Using antibiotics the wrong way can cause bacteria to grow into superbugs.

This could make your next infection much harder to treat.

Infection Prevention and You

APIC
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology

Learn more about antibiotic resistance at **apic.org/infectionpreventionandyou** and **cdc.gov/getsmart.**

What you should know about antibiotic resistance

Did you know?

Antibiotics are drugs used to treat bacterial infections. Using antibiotics the wrong way can lead to antibiotic-resistant infections. Each year in the United States, at least 2 million people get serious infections with bacteria that are resistant to one or more of the antibiotics designed to treat those infections. At least 23,000 people die each year as a direct result of these antibiotic-resistant infections.[1] And this is why healthcare providers are being more careful when prescribing antibiotics.

What is antibiotic resistance?

Antibiotic resistance happens when bacteria change in a way that reduces or eliminates the ability of antibiotics to kill the bacteria.

How can I help prevent antibiotic resistance?

- ✓ Take antibiotics exactly as your healthcare provider instructs.
- ✓ Only take antibiotics prescribed for you.
- ✗ Do not save antibiotics for the next illness or share them with others.
- ✗ Do not pressure your healthcare provider for antibiotics.

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States, 2013.

Top 5 questions you can ask your healthcare provider about antibiotics:

1. "Do I really need an antibiotic?"
2. "Can I get better without this antibiotic?"
3. "What side effects or drug interactions can I expect?"
4. "What side effects should I report to you?"
5. "How do you know what kind of infection I have? I understand that antibiotics won't work for viral infections."

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