GET SMART
About Antibiotics Week
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ANTIBIOTICS AREN'T ALWAYS THE ANSWER

Many common infections are becoming resistant to antibiotics. As a parent, ask questions to make sure your sick child is getting the best care possible, which might not include an antibiotic.

FOR PARENTS

The Facts:

- **Antibiotics can have reactions and side effects.**

Harmful effects from antibiotics, such as side effects and allergic reactions, cause 1 out of 5 emergency department visits for adverse drug events and lead to **50,000 emergency department visits** in children each year.[1]

- **Antibiotics can be overused and misused.**

It is estimated that **more than half of antibiotics are unnecessarily prescribed** to children in doctor office settings for cough and cold illness, most of which are caused by viruses.

- **Antibiotics can only cure infections caused by bacteria, not viruses.**
- **Antibiotic resistance is growing.**

An estimated **2 million illnesses** and **23,000 deaths** occur each year in the United States due to antibiotic-resistant infections.[2] Overuse and misuse of antibiotics are main drivers of resistance.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases

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Questions to Ask Your Provider

If your child is sick, here are **3 important questions** to ask your healthcare professional:

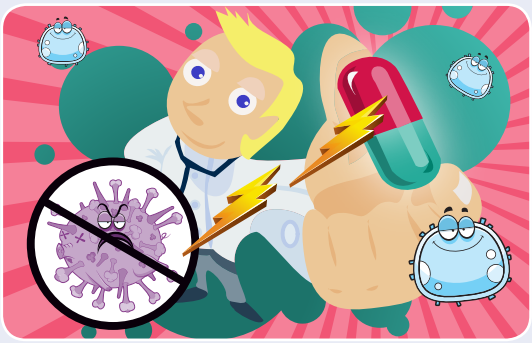
1. What is the best treatment for my child's illness?

Antibiotics aren't needed for common illnesses like colds, most sore throats, the flu, and even some ear infections. These illnesses are often caused by viruses, which do not respond to antibiotics. Sometimes the best treatment is symptom relief.

Illness	Usual Cause		Antibiotic Needed
	Viruses	Bacteria	
Cold/Runny Nose	✓		NO
Bronchitis/Chest Cold (in otherwise healthy children and adults)	✓		NO
Whooping Cough		✓	Yes
Flu	✓		NO
Strep Throat		✓	Yes
Sore Throat (except strep)	✓		NO
Fluid in the Middle Ear (otitis media with effusion)	✓		NO
Urinary Tract Infection		✓	Yes

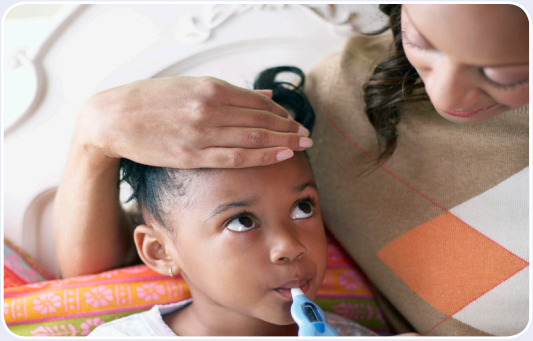
2. Is this the right antibiotic for the type of infection my child has?

If an antibiotic will help your child, it's important to use an antibiotic that is designed to fight the bacteria causing your child's specific illness. If your healthcare professional says your child needs an antibiotic, ask if it's the one most "targeted" to treat the infection while causing the least side effects.



3. What can I do to help my child feel better?

Pain relievers, fever reducers, saline nasal spray or drops, warm compresses, liquids, and rest may be the best things to help your child feel better. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist what symptom relief is best for your child.



Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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Citations:

[1]Bourgeois FT, et al. Pediatric adverse drug events in the outpatient setting: An 11-year national analysis. Pediatrics. 2009;124:e744-50.

[2]CDC. Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States, 2013. 16 September 2013.