

Antibiotics

Antibiotics are drugs that prevent and fight infections caused by bacteria. Antibiotics work by either killing bacteria or stopping them from multiplying. Antibiotics do not have any effect on viruses.

What is Antibiotic Resistance?

Antibiotic resistance is the ability of bacteria to resist the effects of an antibiotic. It is one of the world's biggest public health problems, as many illnesses that were once easily treatable are becoming resistant to antibiotics.

When you take an antibiotic, some bacteria are killed, but resistant bacteria may be left to grow and multiply, causing more harm. They can even spread to others. Antibiotic-resistant infections are often more difficult to cure, more expensive to treat, and usually require more doctor visits or extended hospital stays. Resistant infections can be very serious and can cause death.

Things to do When Prescribed an Antibiotic

- Take your antibiotic exactly as your doctor prescribes.
- Do not skip doses.
- Do not share your prescription with others.
- Do not take antibiotics prescribed for someone else.
- Do not save any of your prescription.

By not taking your antibiotic correctly, you can make your infection stronger and more difficult to treat.

Know the Facts

- Misuse of antibiotics can cause some drugs to become ineffective. People with common infections that at one time were easily treated with antibiotics may suffer from prolonged infections.
- Stopping misuse of antibiotics is the best prevention of antibiotic resistance.
- Children have the highest use of antibiotics. Their treatment is of particular importance in the fight against antibiotic resistance.
- Antibiotics can have side effects. Reactions from antibiotics cause one out of five medication-related visits to the emergency department.
- Some viral infections can last up to two weeks. Antibiotics are not effective against viral infections.
- With most viral infections, once your fever has subsided you can return to work, school, child care, etc.
- Always remember to practice good hand hygiene.

For more information, visit

www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/

www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/healthcare/

or

The North Dakota Department of Health

website at

www.ndhealth.gov/disease/hai/

What you should know about Antibiotic Resistance



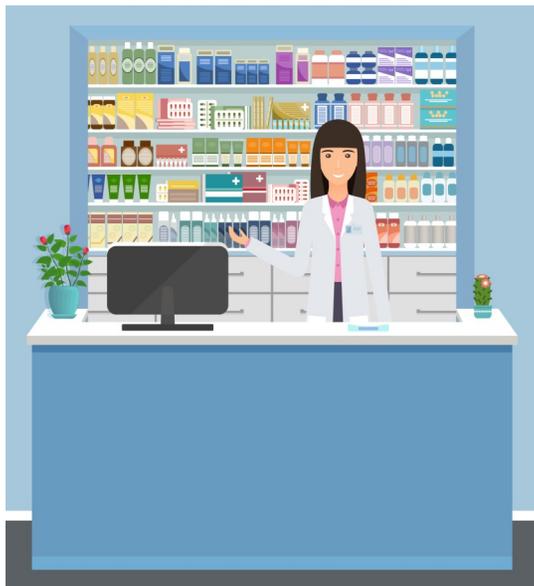
Division of Disease Control
2635 E. Main Avenue, P.O. Box 5520
Bismarck, N.D. 58506-5520
Telephone: 701.328.2378

Over-the-Counter Medicines

Over-the-counter (OTC) medicines for children and adults may help relieve some of the symptoms of viral infections. Remember the following tips when choosing and using OTC medicines.

- For children and adults, always use OTC products as directed.
- Not all products are recommended for children younger than a certain age.
- Cold and cough medicines should be used cautiously with young children.
- OTC medications may help relieve symptoms such as a runny nose, congestion, fever and aches, but they do not shorten the length of time you or your child is sick.

Consult your doctor or pharmacist with any questions you have about OTC medicines.



How Can I Prevent Antibiotic-Resistant Infections?

There are many things YOU can do to prevent antibiotic-resistant infections.

- Do not ask for antibiotics when your doctor thinks you don't need them.
- Only take antibiotics when prescribed, and take them exactly as your doctor prescribes.
- Do not share antibiotics.
- Prevent infections by practicing good hand hygiene and getting recommended vaccines.
- Do not take an antibiotic for a viral infection, such as: cold, flu, most coughs and bronchitis, sore throats (except strep throat), and some ear infections.

Viral Infections

The vast majority of respiratory tract infections seen in the outpatient setting are due to viruses. Antibiotics are not effective against viruses. They will not help you get better faster, and they will not stop you from spreading your infection, as viruses are often contagious prior to symptoms appearing.



Treating Symptoms of a Viral Infection

For most common viral illnesses:

- Get plenty of rest.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Use a clean humidifier or cool mist vaporizer.
- Avoid smoking, second-hand smoke, airborne chemicals or irritants.

Here are some other things you can do to help with symptoms of:

Sore Throat

- Use ice chips.
- Soothe discomfort with sore throat spray or lozenges (do not give lozenges to young children).
- Use a clean humidifier or cool mist vaporizer.

Ear Pain

- Put a warm moist cloth over the ear that hurts.

Sinus Pain/Pressure

- Put a warm compress over the nose and forehead to help relieve sinus pressure.
- Use a decongestant or saline nasal spray.
- Breathe in steam from a bowl of hot water or a shower. Use with caution around children.

Runny Nose

- Use a decongestant or saline nasal spray to help relieve nasal symptoms.

Cough

- Use a clean humidifier or cool mist vaporizer or breathe in steam from a bowl of hot water or a shower. Use with caution around children.



Keep your health care provider informed if your symptoms get worse or last longer than expected.