

GET SMART...

- * Antibiotics are strong medicines, but they don't cure everything.
- * When not used correctly, antibiotics can actually be harmful to your health.
- * Antibiotics can cure most bacterial infections. Antibiotics cannot cure viral illnesses.
- * Antibiotics kill bacteria – not viruses.
- * When you are sick, antibiotics are not always the answer



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Please visit our website for more information on how to prevent the spread of infections.

[www.fcmcpa.org/
infectioncontrol](http://www.fcmcpa.org/infectioncontrol)



Antibiotic Stewardship Program

www.fcmcpa.org

717-485-2873



*For Health Care
Close to Home*

Antibiotics are not always the answer to getting better or getting better faster if you are sick. Review the following information to learn how to use antibiotics more effectively. For more information, talk to your health-care provider or visit www.cdc.gov/getsmart.

Antibiotic Resistance

Antibiotics can help to treat certain bacterial infections. However, use of antibiotics when they are not needed causes some bacteria to become resistant. These resistant bacteria become harder to kill and can even spread to others. Resistant bacteria reduce the chance that future treatments will work for you or for others. Stronger antibiotics may be required which may have increased side-effects, may require longer treatments, may require a longer stay in the hospital, or may not be able to be cured.

Antibiotic resistance, risk and consequences:

- * Resistant bacteria are more difficult to kill
- * stronger antibiotics have increased side effects
- * increased risk of other infections (such as C.difficile)
- * increased risk to others if spread.

Antibiotics and Viruses

Most infections are caused by either bacteria or viruses. Antibiotics can be used to treat bacterial infections, such as strep throat, some types of pneumonias, and wound infections. However, antibiotics are not effective against viral infections, such as the common cold, influenza, or even allergies.

Using antibiotics for a viral infection

- * will not cure the infection
- * will not help you feel better faster
- * will not keep you from spreading the illness to others



Be Responsible, Protect Yourself

Antibiotics should not be used to treat the flu or the common cold. If you are prescribed antibiotics for a bacterial infection, be sure to take all of the medication at the scheduled times.

- * *Do not skip doses, do not stop taking your antibiotic before it is empty.*
- * *Skipping doses and not taking the full prescription can cause resistant bacteria to develop.*

What can you do:

- * Make sure you finish your antibiotic prescription
- * Make sure to take your prescription as prescribed without skipping doses
- * Ask about alternative potential treatments or prevention of recurrent infections.

Questions/Answers:

Will an antibiotic help me get over a cold faster?

No, antibiotics will not help fight a viral infection. An antibiotic will not help you get over a viral infection quicker. Ask your healthcare provider what types of therapy can help support your body and immune system to fight the viral infection.

