



The good and bad of antibiotics

What are antibiotics?

Antibiotics are used to stop the growth of or to destroy bacteria of infectious diseases.

If you have a virus, antibiotics will not cure an infection, help you feel better or keep others from catching an illness. Viral infections include:

- Cold
- Flu
- Most coughs
- Most bronchitis
- Runny nose

Taking antibiotics for viral infections will NOT:

- Cure the infection
- Help you feel better
- Keep other individuals from catching the illness

If you've been prescribed antibiotics, take them as directed and for the length of time directed by the doctor.

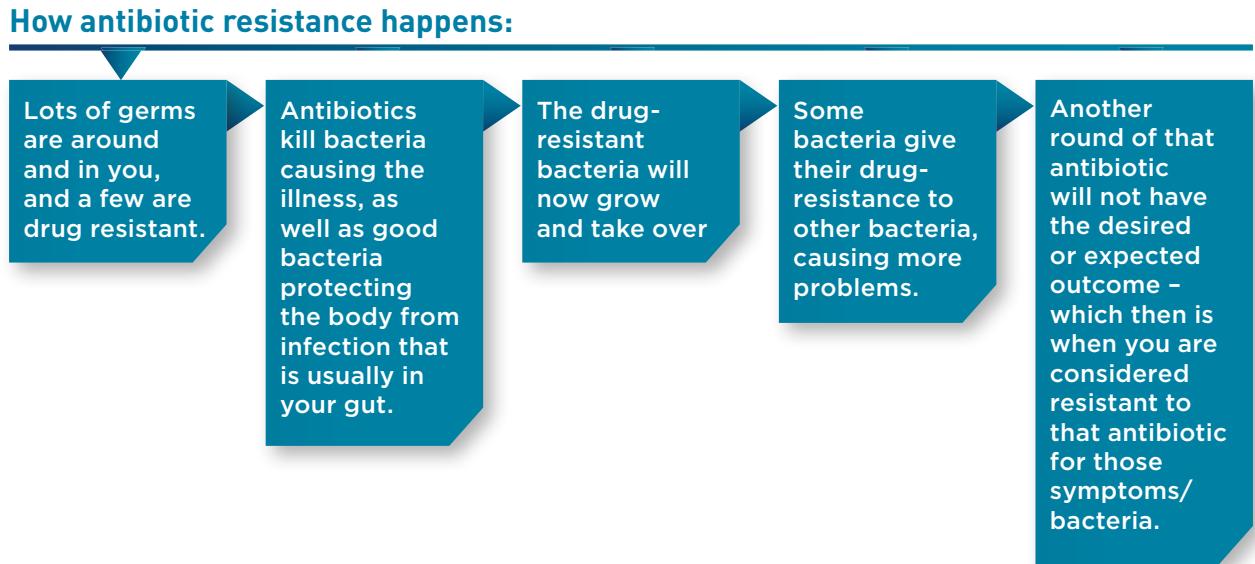
The good of antibiotics

- Kills bacteria that are causing your discomfort or illness
- Many lab tests can tell providers your symptoms are caused by a bacteria or a virus. If you have a bacterial illness, antibiotics can help you feel better (relieve symptoms) usually within a day or two.

The bad of antibiotics

- They kill the healthy bacteria in your gut, allowing more harmful bacteria to grow in its place
- All drugs have side effects; make sure to ask your pharmacist about what to expect and common adverse effects
- If not taken appropriately and when needed, they can contribute to antibiotic resistance
 - Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria are not killed, but the growth just slows down. Once bacteria start to grow again, you may have more symptoms and the same antibiotics may not work again!
 - Bacteria will inevitably find ways of resisting the antibiotics developed

How antibiotic resistance happens:



Lots of germs are around and in you, and a few are drug resistant.

Antibiotics kill bacteria causing the illness, as well as good bacteria protecting the body from infection that is usually in your gut.

The drug-resistant bacteria will now grow and take over

Some bacteria give their drug-resistance to other bacteria, causing more problems.

Another round of that antibiotic will not have the desired or expected outcome - which then is when you are considered resistant to that antibiotic for those symptoms/bacteria.

References:

1. Get Smart Campaign, Antibiotic Resistance, cdc.gov, 9/26/17.
2. Dictionary.com: Antibiotic, dictionary.com, 9/26/17.