

Using Antibiotics Safely

Antibiotics are medications used to fight infections in your body caused by bacteria. Antibiotics treat infections by getting rid of bacteria or slowing its growth. You should only take antibiotics to treat infections caused by bacteria such as Strep Throat or a Urinary Tract Infection. Antibiotics won't help some bacterial infections such as bronchitis, sinus infections, and some ear infections. Antibiotics do not work on viruses such as colds, runny nose, and flu.

If you are prescribed antibiotics by your healthcare provider, it's important to take them only as directed. Here are some tips to take your antibiotics safely. Take your prescription on time. Try to take it as close to the same time each day. If you forget a dose, call your healthcare provider.

Take your entire prescription, even if you feel better. If you stop taking your medication before you finish your prescription, you may not get rid of all the bacteria that made you sick. Carefully read the label on your prescription before taking it. When taking some medications, you may need to take them with food to avoid an upset stomach while other antibiotics work best on an empty stomach.

Remember not to share your antibiotics with friends or family or take medications prescribed for someone else. You or a loved one could have an allergic reaction to the antibiotic. Some people may have side effects when taking antibiotics. Common side effects include a rash, yeast infection, nausea, and diarrhea. Nausea and diarrhea can lead to dehydration, so make sure to drink plenty of water.

Some antibiotics may interact with other medications, so talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist if you are taking other medications.

Finally, take steps to avoid getting yourself and others sick. Wash your hands with soap and warm water. Wear a mask when going out especially during the winter when infections are most likely to occur. Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze. Stay home when you're sick. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Avoid close contact with people who have colds or other upper respiratory infections. Get recommended vaccines, including the flu vaccine.

If you have questions about taking antibiotics, talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist. For more information on antibiotic safety, go to [cdc.gov/antibiotic-use](https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use).