Save Antibiotics for the Big Game!

What is antibiotic resistance?

Antibiotic use can lead to development of bacteria resistant to antibiotics. Antibiotic-resistant bacteria are harder to kill and can cause untreatable infections. If those resistant bacteria cause an infection, it can require more complex treatments and even prolonged hospital stays.

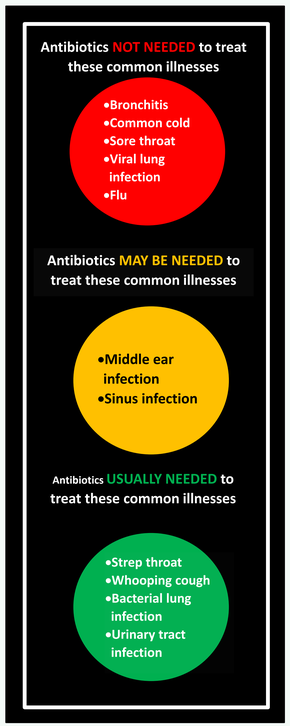
What's the harm, anyway?

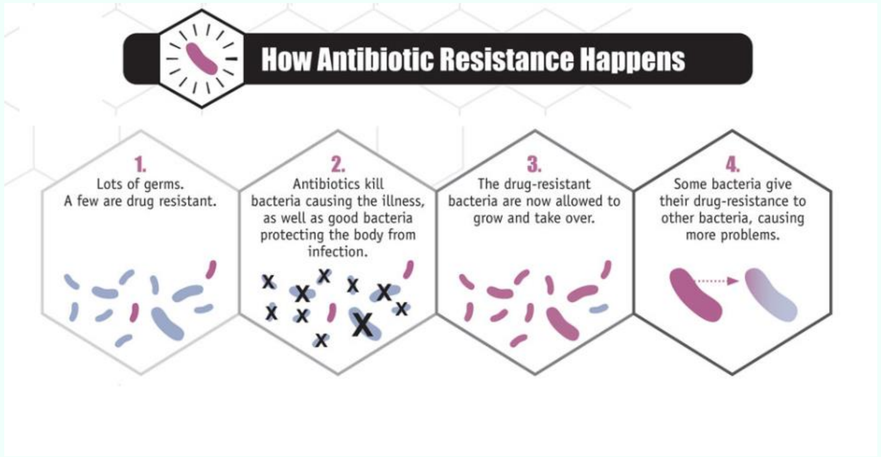
Antibiotics are not completely harmless. They can lead to side effects, including:

- Diarrhea (including developing deadly *C. difficile* diarrhea)
- Nausea and vomiting
- Vaginal yeast infections
- Allergic reactions
- Damage to nerves and tendons
- Antibiotic-resistant bacteria

Are antibiotics needed?

Stop, **Proceed with caution**, or **Go**?





How does antibiotic resistance develop?

1. Antibiotic resistance begins with an infection, where there are a lot of germs present, including a few that are resistant to drugs.
2. Antibiotics are given to fight the bacteria, which kill the drug-sensitive germs as well as the good bacteria in a person's body.
3. That leaves the surviving drug-resistant bacteria to grow and take over.
4. Not only do the drug-resistant bacteria multiply, they can also give their resistance to other bacteria, adding more problems.

Do

- Ask your healthcare provider if there are ways to relieve your symptoms without antibiotics, such as taking over-the-counter pain relievers or drinking more fluids.
- Avoid infections by washing your hands frequently and getting all recommended vaccines.
- Take the full prescription whenever you are prescribed antibiotics.

…and Don't

- **Do not pressure** your healthcare provider to prescribe antibiotics… ask how you can feel better without them.
- **Do not ask** to be tested for a urinary tract infection if you have no symptoms.
- **Do not take** an antibiotic for a viral infection. Antibiotics will not cure a cold, flu, most sore throats, most coughs and bronchitis, or many sinus infections.

You can make a difference! Always remember:

Ask the question, "are there options other than taking an antibiotic to make me or my family member feel better?"

It's about being sure you or your family receive the **right dose** of the **right antibiotic** for the **right amount of time**, and **ONLY when truly necessary**.

ICAP Infection Control Assessment and Promotion Program

University of Nebraska Medical Center Nebraska Medicine

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ASAP Nebraska Antimicrobial Stewardship Assessment and Promotion Program

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