Antibiotics are a powerful weapon in the treatment of infections. But using more antibiotics doesn’t always mean better healthcare. Understanding the signs along this winding treatment path is important on the road to recovery. After sending some tests, your healthcare provider may start you on antibiotics based on certain signs and symptoms of possible infection. When test results come back, your healthcare provider may decide to stop, change, or continue the antibiotic treatment path. Bumps along the road such as side effects may also alter the treatment path.

Your treatment path may begin with tests, such as blood or urine, to look for infection before you are started on an antibiotic.

Depending on how you feel and what your test results show, the antibiotic you are on may be stopped, changed, or continued.

If your tests show no evidence of infection, your healthcare provider should stop the antibiotic because they will not provide benefits to you.

If your tests show evidence of infection, your healthcare provider may switch from a “broad-spectrum” antibiotic to a “narrow-spectrum” antibiotic to match the specific bacteria found in your test results.

If your tests show infection and the antibiotic you are on matches the specific bacteria, your healthcare provider may continue the same drug.

Antibiotics are not fun to take if you don’t need them! They can have serious side effects such as allergic reactions, diarrhea that can be severe (Clostridium difficile infection), nausea and vomiting. Your healthcare provider will try to adjust your antibiotic to reduce the chances of these unwanted effects.

You can help set the course for the sensible use of antibiotic as a patient or caregiver by asking questions:

What infection is being treated with the antibiotic? Are there ways to treat the symptoms without antibiotic?

What tests can help determine the cause of the infection, and whether the antibiotic is the right match?

What side effects are possible from the antibiotic?

How long should I take the antibiotic?

Based on information available on www.CDC.gov.
Developed by Nebraska ASAP/Nebraska ICAP; go to https://www.nebraskamed.com/for-providers/nebraska-asap for more information.