



Antibiotics work for some infections but they can cause side effects and lead to antibiotic resistance. Be sure to talk with your healthcare provider so that you use antibiotics only when needed. Never pressure your providers to give you antibiotics when they feel they are not needed.

5 IMPORTANT QUESTIONS to Ask Your Healthcare Provider about Taking Antibiotics

➤ **Do I have a bacterial infection?**

Antibiotics kill bacteria. They do not fight viruses – like common colds, flu, sinus infections or most sore throats. If you do not have a bacterial infection, antibiotics will not make you feel better.

➤ **Are there any side effects or risks with taking antibiotics?**

Antibiotics can cause side effects like upset stomach, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, rash or other health problems. Taking antibiotics when you do not need them may cause them not to work the next time you do need them. This is called “antibiotic resistance”.

➤ **Are there other ways I can feel better without taking antibiotics?**

Getting plenty of rest and drinking lots of fluids are actions that can make you feel better. Some problems will only get better with antibiotics, while others can get better without them.

➤ **How much do antibiotics cost?**

Antibiotics may or may not cost a lot of money. But, if you take them when you do not need them, they will not help you and may result in side effects and antibiotic resistance. In this way, they may cost you more in the long run.

➤ **When should I stop taking antibiotics?**

Depending on your condition, antibiotics may be stopped a day or two after your symptoms get better. When you are prescribed an antibiotic it is important to ask your healthcare provider when it is safe to stop taking them.

To learn more about antibiotic use, visit www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use.

