

FROM THE CDC: DIVISION OF BACTERIAL DISEASES*

Antibiotics are not always the answer

Most cough and cold illnesses are caused by viruses. Antibiotic use can only cure bacterial illnesses—not viral illnesses. Viral illnesses, like colds, usually go away without treatment in a week or two. When an antibiotic is not prescribed, ask your doctor or pharmacist what can be used to relieve symptoms.

VIRUSES CAUSE COMMON ILLNESSES LIKE:

Cold and flu
Runny noses
Most coughs

Most bronchitis
Most sore throats
Most sinus infections



Taking antibiotics for viral illnesses:

- Will NOT cure you or your child's illness.
- Will NOT help you or your child feel better.
- Will NOT keep others from catching you or your child's illness.

There are risks when taking any prescription drug

Antibiotic use can cause complications, ranging from an upset stomach to a serious allergic reaction. Your doctor will weigh the risks and benefits before prescribing an antibiotic.

Antibiotics only treat bacterial infections

If you have a viral infection like a cold, talk to a doctor or pharmacist about symptom relief. This may include over-the-counter medicine, a humidifier, or warm liquids.

Antibiotics are life-saving drugs

Using antibiotics wisely is the best way to preserve their strength for future bacterial illnesses.

Most sore throats DO NOT require an antibiotic

Only 1 in 5 children and 1 in 20 adults seen by a doctor for a sore throat has strep throat, which is treated with an antibiotic. Your doctor can only confirm strep throat by running a test.

Green mucus is NOT a sign that an antibiotic is needed

As the body's immune system fights off an infection, mucus can change color. This is normal and does not mean you need an antibiotic.