



I have a bug, why do I **NOT** need antibiotics?

Most sore throats, chest, nose and ear infections are due to a type of bug called viruses.

These infections may make you feel unwell. However, most of the time, after a few days, you will get better on your own.

Antibiotics do **NOT** work for infections due to viruses.

They **ONLY** work if your infection is due to another type of bug called bacteria.

Taking antibiotics when they are needed can be lifesaving. **BUT** taking antibiotics when they are **NOT** needed can cause antibiotic resistance.

What is antibiotic resistance?

Antibiotic resistance is when bacteria change, so that they can no longer be killed by antibiotics. This means that the antibiotic will not work when you really need it. The more we use antibiotics the more chances bacteria have of becoming resistant.

How does antibiotic resistance spread?

Resistant bacteria can spread from person to person through poor hygiene and living close together. They can also spread through food, water, soil and air. Antibiotic resistant bacteria in your body may stay there for up to a year.

Other problems with antibiotics

Antibiotics can also sometimes cause:

- side effects including thrush, stomach pains and diarrhoea
- allergies, normally just annoying rashes, but in some cases, these can be serious.

In the past 50 years only one new antibiotic has been developed for use in humans. This means that we need to stop antibiotic resistance to make sure that the antibiotics we do have continue to work.

Stopping antibiotic resistance means they work when you need them!

Using antibiotics only when you need them saves you \$\$\$\$

What can I do to stop antibiotic resistance?



Do not ask for antibiotics every time you are sick. Your doctor can suggest other ways to make you feel better.



Avoid food poisoning by washing fruits and vegetables and cooking food properly.



Return any leftover antibiotics to your pharmacy.



Prevent infections by washing your hands and keeping up to date with vaccinations.



Only take antibiotics when they are for you. Do not use or share leftover antibiotics.



When you are given antibiotics follow your doctor's advice. For example, taking antibiotics for the number of days advised.

What can I do to feel better?



Ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice on ways to feel better. There may be tablets, lozenges, sprays or gargles that help.



Drink water or a soothing drink like honey and lemon.



Cover your mouth when coughing.



Get plenty of rest.



Use tissues when you sneeze.



Inhale steam from the shower.

When will I feel better?

If you have a:	Most people will be completely better after...
Middle-ear infection	8 days
Sore throat	7 - 8 days
Sinus infection	14 - 21 days
Cold	14 days
Cough or chest infection	21 days
Other infections days

When should I seek help?

See your doctor immediately if you have:

- a severe headache
- very cold skin
- trouble breathing
- confusion
- chest pain
- problems swallowing
- blood when you cough, or
- begin to feel a lot worse.

Where can I get help?

- Visit or call your local doctor.
- Nurse-On-Call 1300 60 60 24. This phone service provides health advice from a nurse, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (for the cost of a local call, calls from mobile phones may be charged at a higher rate).
- Check the healthdirect app - from App Store or Google play.
- In an emergency call 000 or go to the nearest hospital emergency department.