

SAFETY & USAGE

ANTIBIOTICS

Make an appointment with your health care provider, or call Sandhills Center:

1-800-256-2452
(TTY: 1-866-518-6778)



SANDHILLS CENTER

An NC Medicaid Behavioral Health and
Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Tailored Plan

We assure that people in need have access to quality physical and behavioral health services in 11 central North Carolina counties.

Visit us at: SandhillsCenter.org.

ANSON-DAVIDSON-GUILFORD-HARNETT-HOKE-LEE
MONTGOMERY-MOORE-RANDOLPH-RICHMOND-ROCKINGHAM

DO I REALLY NEED ANTIBIOTICS?

Antibiotics are medications health care providers prescribe for some types of infections caused by bacteria.

Antibiotics do not work on viruses, such as colds, flu and runny noses, even if the mucus is thick, yellow or green. Antibiotics also will not help for some common bacterial infections including most cases of bronchitis, many types of sinus infections, and some ear infections.

CAN I FEEL BETTER WITHOUT ANTIBIOTICS?

Respiratory viruses usually go away in a week or two without treatment. To stay healthy and keep others healthy, you should:

- Wash your hands often.
- Cover coughs.
- Stay home when sick.
- Get recommended vaccines.

SOMETIMES, ANTIBIOTICS CAN CAUSE SIDE EFFECTS

Any time antibiotics are used, they can cause side effects. However, antibiotics can save lives. When you need antibiotics, the benefits outweigh the risks of side effects. If you do not need antibiotics, you should not take them because they can cause harm.

Common side effects of antibiotics include:

- Rash
- Dizziness
- Nausea (upset stomach)
- Yeast infection
- Diarrhea

One out of five medication-related visits to the emergency room are from reactions to antibiotics. Antibiotics are the most common cause of emergency department visits for side effects in children under age 18.

Get immediate medical help if you experience severe diarrhea. It could be a symptom of a serious infection (*C. difficile*) that can lead to severe colon damage and even death. People also can have severe life-threatening allergic reactions from taking antibiotics.

If you experience any side effects, follow up with your health care provider.

WHAT ARE ANTIBIOTIC-RESISTANT BACTERIA?

It is important to stress that antibiotics can save lives. But any time antibiotics are used, they can lead to antibiotic resistance. Antibiotic resistance happens when germs like bacteria and fungi are able to defeat the drugs designed to kill them. If antibiotics lose their effectiveness, then we lose the ability to treat infections.

When bacteria become resistant, antibiotics cannot fight them, and the bacteria multiply. Some resistant bacteria can be harder to treat and can spread to other people.

More than 2.8 million antibiotic-resistant infections occur in the United States each year. More than 35,000 people die as a result.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has a program called Be Antibiotics Aware that stresses the importance of smart use of antibiotics for the best care. The CDC urges you to talk to your health care provider about how you can feel better when antibiotics are not needed.

To learn more about antibiotic prescribing and use, visit:

www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use

-or-

call 1-800-CDC-INFO

