

Proper Use of Antibiotics: Do's & Don'ts

Don't ask your doctor for an antibiotic when you aren't feeling well.¹

Not all illnesses require antibiotics. (Remember, antibiotics kill bacteria, not viruses.) Studies show that patients will drop their physician if he/she won't prescribe antibiotics that the patient believes he/she needs. According to the Centers for Disease Control, 20-50 percent of antibiotics prescribed each year are unnecessary.²

Do complete all antibiotics prescribed by your doctor, as directed.

If you stop taking your medication, you will only kill the weak bacteria. Your infection may come back, or the hardest bacteria may survive and develop the ability to resist antibiotics. In other words, you may develop antibiotic resistance.^{1,2}

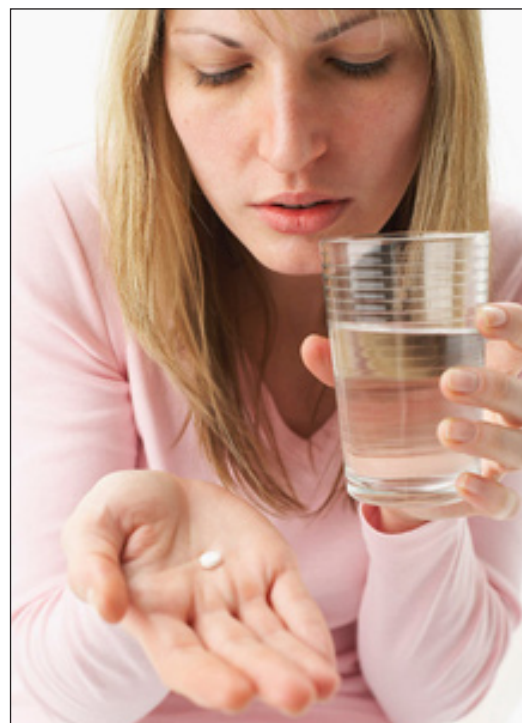
Do ask questions.¹

If you have questions about your medication, ask your doctor. Call your doctor's office if you have questions once you return home.

Don't share your antibiotics.¹

Sharing antibiotics can create problems for both parties. Your infection may return, or you may develop antibiotic resistance if the antibiotic is incorrectly used or unnecessary for your particular illness.

Do call your doctor if you don't start to feel better after a few days of antibiotic use.¹



Sources:

1. Texas Department of State Health Services (2006). Antibiotic use do's and don't [on-line]. Retrieved October 5, 2006. From http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/health/antibiotic_resistance/educational/AntibioticUse_Dos_%20Donts_Edu_Flyer.pdf.
2. Texas Department of State Health Services (2006). Antibiotic resistance – Questions and Answers [on-line]. Retrieved October 5, 2006. From http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/health/antibiotic_resistance/educational/AntibioticResistanceOA_%20Edu_Flyer.pdf.