

Safe Use of Antibiotics

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(Full version)



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Safe Use of Antibiotics

- What are antibiotics?
- Are there any risks of using antibiotics?
- What are antibiotic resistant bacteria (resistant bacteria)?
- Points to note when taking antibiotics
- Frequently asked questions
- Summary

What are Antibiotics?

- Antibiotics are used for treating bacterial infections
- They do not work for viral infections such as a cold or the flu



Are There Any Risks of Using Antibiotics?

- **Yes, potential risks include :**
 - Side effects and allergic reactions
 - Infections due to resistant bacteria

Side Effects of Antibiotics (1)

- Each type of antibiotic has its **specific** side effects
- **Common** symptoms include:
 - Nausea
 - Vomiting
 - Constipation or diarrhoea
 - Headache

Side Effects of Antibiotics (2)

- **Allergic reactions**
 - Rash
 - Itchiness
 - Breathlessness
- **If you have any allergic reaction(s) after taking antibiotics, you should bring the drugs to consult a doctor promptly**



What are Antibiotic Resistant Bacteria?

- Bacteria change in ways to become resistant to the antibiotics which they are previously sensitive to
- That is, the previous effective treatment is no longer capable of controlling the same infection
- When the bacteria become resistant to most antibiotics, they are referred to as “superbugs”

Infection due to Resistant Bacteria

- While taking antibiotics, they will also kill the normal bacteria in our body and increase the risk of acquiring more resistant bacteria
- Infections due to resistant bacteria are very difficult to treat
- Posing a significant threat to population health

Points to Note When Taking Antibiotics (1)

- Consult the doctor for using the right drug for the disease
- Follow health professionals' instructions on using antibiotics



Points to Note When Taking Antibiotics (2)

- **Enhance personal protective measures**

- Maintain proper hand hygiene
- Consume food or drinks that are thoroughly cooked or boiled
- Disinfect and cover all wounds properly
- Wear a mask while having respiratory symptoms
- Young children with symptoms of infection should minimise contact with other children



Points to Note When Taking Antibiotics (3)

- Never share antibiotics with other people or store them up for later use



FAQ (1)

- **What are the differences between bacteria and virus?**
 - Bacteria are tiny organisms that can reproduce independently
 - Viruses are even much smaller than bacteria that can only reproduce inside living cells
 - They have different properties and may cause different diseases

Examples of bacteria and viruses and the diseases they cause:

Germs		Disease example(s)
Bacteria	<i>Escherichia coli (E.coli)</i>	Urinary tract infection Diarrhoeal disease
	<i>Streptococcus pneumoniae</i>	Chest infection Middle ear infection
	<i>Staphylococcus aureus</i>	Skin and soft tissue infection
Viruses	Rhinovirus	Cold
	Influenza virus, e.g. H1N1, H3N2	Influenza
	Varicella-zoster virus	Chickenpox
	Enterovirus	Hand, foot and mouth disease

FAQ (2)

- **Are antibiotics miracle anti-inflammatory drugs that cure all kinds of inflammation?**
 - Antibiotics are drugs for treating bacterial infections
 - Anti-inflammatory drug is a general name referring to a group of drugs which can reduce inflammation and relieve pain, such as non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs like aspirin. Their actions are different from that of antibiotics
 - If you have query about the drugs you are taking, you should consult your doctor

FAQ (3)

- **If I have fever, do I need antibiotics?**
 - Fever is a common symptom which may or may not be caused by bacteria
 - Follow health professionals' instructions on the use of antibiotics
 - Do not request antibiotics from your doctor
 - Do not self-medicate antibiotics

FAQ (4)

- **If I have yellow / green nasal discharge, do I need antibiotics?**
 - It is quite normal for the discharge to become thick and change colour during a cold or the flu.
There may or may not be an associated bacterial infection.
 - Consult your doctor on using antibiotics

Summary

Safe Use of
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- Antibiotics are used to treat bacterial infections, they do not work for a cold or the flu
- Consult a doctor first, let him decide if antibiotics are needed
- Antibiotics kill normal bacteria in our body, increase the chance of acquiring resistant bacteria
- Enhance personal hygiene when taking antibiotics