

# Antibiotic Awareness

## Will antibiotics help my child?

Antibiotics save lives, but they only work to treat certain infections caused by bacteria. Antibiotics do not work for infections caused by viruses. Giving your child antibiotics when they aren't needed puts your child at risk for side effects:

- Rash
- Nausea
- Diarrhea
- Allergic reaction

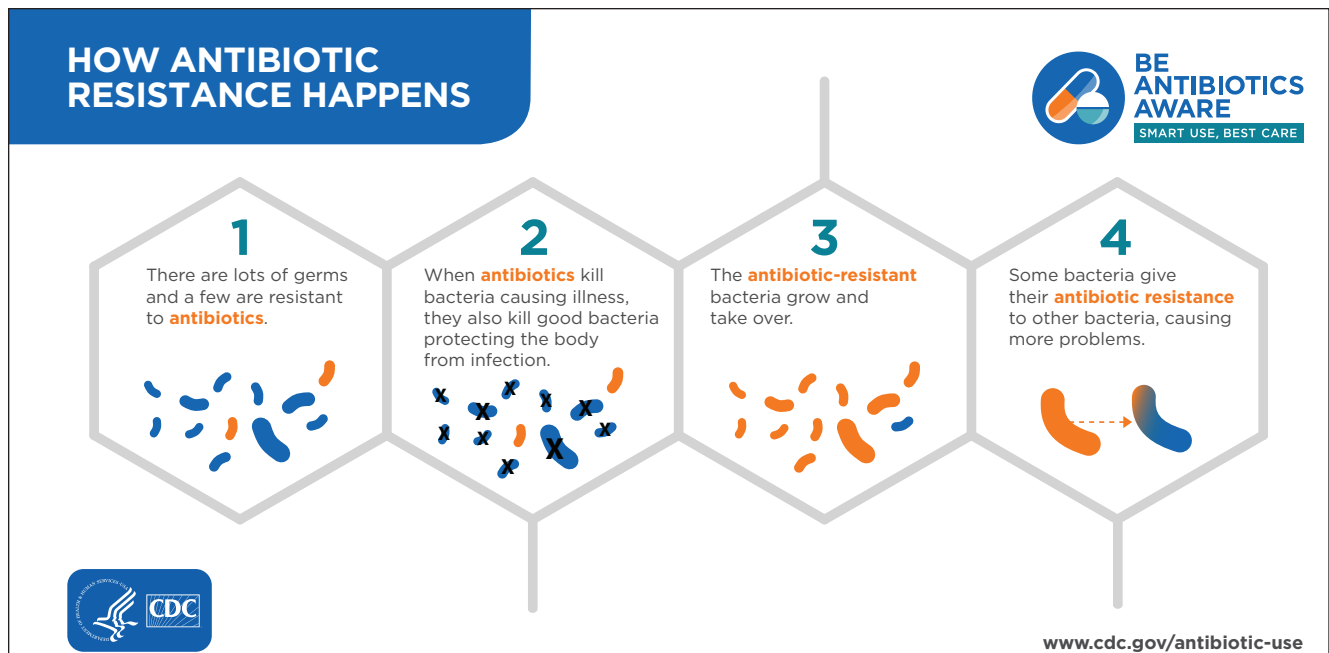
Antibiotics are the most common reason for Emergency Department visits for adverse drug events in children.

When your child is sick enough to see a doctor, ask your doctor if your child's illness is caused by bacteria or a virus. If it's caused by a virus, don't ask for an antibiotic. Instead, ask how you can help your child to feel better.

Common Infection	Bacteria or Virus	Antibiotics Needed?
Strep throat	Bacteria	Yes
Urinary tract infection	Bacteria	Yes
Abscess	Bacteria	Yes
Ear infection	Either	Maybe
Pneumonia	Either	Maybe
Common cold (runny nose, cough)	Virus	No
Sore throat not due to strep	Virus	No
Chest cold (bronchitis)	Virus	No
Bronchiolitis	Virus	No
Stomach flu	Virus	No

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## What is antibiotic resistance?

Antibiotic resistance means that bacteria have changed and cannot be killed by antibiotics. The more antibiotics are used, the more bacteria become resistant.

Infections caused by antibiotic-resistant bacteria:

- Are harder to treat
- May make your child sicker
- May last longer
- May cost a lot more money to treat
- Can be deadly

The CDC estimates that each year in the U.S., more than 2.8 million people get infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria, and at least 35,000 people die as a result.

## What else can I do to protect my child and prevent antibiotic resistance?

Besides asking your doctor whether your child's illness is caused by bacteria or a virus, you can:

- Always dispose of leftover antibiotics. Never save antibiotics for future illnesses.
- Never give your child antibiotics prescribed for others.
- Never share antibiotics with others.
- Make sure your child has received all recommended vaccines.

