



## **Antibiotic Resistance**

There are two main kinds of germs: viruses and bacteria. Antibiotics are drugs used to treat infections caused by bacteria. Antibiotics do not treat or help with infections caused by viruses like the flu, colds, or most sore throats.

Antibiotic resistance means that bacteria have changed and cannot be killed by the antibiotics. These bacteria are called drug-resistant bacteria. This means that some antibiotics may not work if your child needs them in the future.

### **How antibiotic resistance happens**

- The body has a lot of bacteria. Some may be drug-resistant or may become drug resistant after exposure to an antibiotic.
- Antibiotic drugs kill the bacteria that intend to cause the infection or illness, but they also may kill good bacteria that protect the body from illness.
- The drug-resistant bacteria continue to live and grow inside the body.
- The drug-resistant bacteria can pass along drug-resistance to other bacteria.
- The drug-resistant bacteria can cause infections.

### **Antibiotic resistant infections**

These infections are different than other infections. Infections caused by drug-resistant bacteria:

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

## How to protect your child

Keep your child protected by talking to your caregiver about how best to treat certain kinds of illness and infections. To avoid antibiotic resistance, the team of caregivers at Nationwide Children's Hospital will only prescribe antibiotics when needed.

- You should not be giving your child antibiotics for:
  - Colds
  - The flu
  - Sore throats NOT caused by strep
  - Runny noses
  - Most earaches
- Ask your doctor why your child does or does not need antibiotics. If your child's doctor believes that your child will not be helped by antibiotics, there is a good reason for the decision not to give them. Never pressure the doctor for antibiotics. Instead, ask for the best treatment for your child's illness.
- Your child's doctor may recommend "watchful waiting." This means to wait a few days to see if the child gets better before deciding to prescribe antibiotics. Ask if watchful waiting is right for your child.
- Ask about side effects. Talk to your child's doctor or pharmacist about possible side effects of antibiotics.
- Throw leftover antibiotics away. Talk to your child's pharmacist about how to dispose of leftover antibiotics.
- Never save antibiotics for future illnesses
- Never give your child antibiotics prescribed for others
- Never share antibiotics with others.

## When to call the doctor

Talk to your child's doctor if you have any concerns about antibiotic-resistant infections.