

Antibiotics

What are antibiotics used for?

Antibiotics are used to treat infections caused by bacteria, such as:

- Strep throat
- Sinus infection
- Pneumonia
- Urinary tract infection

Antibiotics won't treat viruses or other types of infections that are not caused by bacteria. For example, they will not treat colds or the flu. They are sometimes given to prevent infection. Antibiotics come in different forms, such as liquids, pills, shots, drops, ointments, and gels.

How do they work?

Antibiotics treat infections by killing bacteria or stopping their growth. Once bacterial growth is stopped, the body's normal defenses can attack the bacteria.

There are many types of antibiotics. Each works a little differently. Some are for specific types of bacteria. Your healthcare provider will prescribe the antibiotic that is best for your infection. You may need more than 1 type of antibiotic for some infections.

What else do I need to know about this medicine?

- Taking antibiotics when you don't need them can cause problems. Bacteria can change and become resistant to antibiotics. This means that an antibiotic may no longer be able to kill the bacteria. There are now some bacteria that are resistant to all known antibiotics.
- Follow the directions that come with your medicine, including information about food or alcohol. Make sure you know how and when to take your medicine. Do not take more or less than you are supposed to take.
- Take antibiotics for as long as your healthcare provider prescribes, even if you feel better. If you stop taking the medicine too soon, you may not kill all of the bacteria and you may get sick again. Never save antibiotics for future use, or use leftover antibiotics.
- Many medicines have side effects. A side effect is a symptom or problem that is caused by the medicine. Ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist what side effects the medicine may cause and what you should do if you have side effects.
- Try to get all of your prescriptions filled at the same place. Your pharmacist can help make sure that all of your medicines are safe to take together.
- Keep a list of your medicines with you. List all of the prescription medicines, nonprescription medicines, supplements, natural remedies, and vitamins that

you take. Tell all healthcare providers who treat you about all of the products you are taking.

If you have any questions, ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for more information. Be sure to keep all appointments for provider visits or tests.

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