

## Antibiotic Resistance

Myth 2 – Antibiotics can cure common colds, sore throats, coughs, and the aches and pains that accompany a cold or flu.

### **FIRST HEALTH URGES YOU TO TALK TO YOUR DOCTOR AND PHARMACIST ABOUT ALTERNATIVES TO ANTIBIOTICS**

You have a cold that you can't seem to get rid of. So you visit your doctor to request a prescription for an antibiotic. Although antibiotics will not cure the common cold because it's a viral infection, you might prefer to have one anyway. However, your doctor may not prescribe you one, even if you persist.

For decades, antibiotics have been prescribed for every sniffle and sneeze, even when the source of the problem was a virus. Unfortunately, antibiotics have no impact on viral infections, such as common colds, coughs, sore throats, and their associated aches and pains. It's important to know when to take an antibiotic and when to let an illness run its course. There are many alternatives when an antibiotic is not prescribed. Talk with your doctor and pharmacist to find out more about your illness and how to effectively treat it.

#### **Don't be afraid to ask your doctor questions**

Only your doctor can diagnose your illness and determine if you need an antibiotic. Speak openly with your doctor about your symptoms. The more you know about your condition, the easier it will be to understand why an antibiotic may or may not be prescribed. Don't be afraid to ask your doctor questions. If an antibiotic is prescribed, ask questions about the proper use, and be sure to finish the entire prescription. If an antibiotic is not prescribed, find out about other ways to treat your illness or alleviate your symptoms.

#### **Use your pharmacist as a resource**

Also consider asking your pharmacist about off-the-shelf alternatives. Pharmacists are often willing to take the time to explain "the fine print." In addition, by having all your prescriptions filled at the same pharmacy, the pharmacist is in a better position to know about potential drug interaction problems with any other medication you may be taking.

You can better manage your health if you have information and communicate with your doctor. To learn more about the problem of antibiotic resistance, talk to your doctor or pharmacist and view all the information on the **First Health** Web site.

## **Sidebar**

### **Common Remedies**

As recommended by the Food and Drug Administration, these common remedies can help with colds, sniffles, sore throats, coughs, and the aches and pains that accompany a cold or flu.

- Raise the humidity level by sitting in the bathroom with a hot shower running or using a humidifier/vaporizer.
- Drink extra fluids; warm fluids are especially soothing for irritated throats.
- Gargle with salt water.
- Suck on hard candy. Hard candies are as effective as cough drops.
- Try saline nose drops or sprays.
- Get plenty of rest.
- Wash your hands often.
- Eat soup.
- Relieve symptoms with over-the-counter cold and cough medicines.