

Antibiotic Resistance

Myth 4 – Children fight off most childhood illnesses better with antibiotics.

UNSURE WHAT TO DO WHEN YOUR CHILD IS SICK? FIRST HEALTH HELPS PROVIDE EDUCATION

When your child is not feeling well, you are the first person he/she expects to help them feel better. If your child can't sleep, you can't sleep. So of course you want them to feel better, as soon as possible.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the most common childhood illnesses (sore throats, bronchitis and common colds) rarely warrant antibiotics. Children may get better a bit quicker at first with antibiotics, but then they are likely to get sick more often, with longer, more stubborn infections caused by more resistant bacteria.

It's important to ask questions if your pediatrician prescribes an antibiotic. It's equally important to know how you can help your child when an antibiotic is not prescribed.

Questions to ask your pediatrician

If your pediatrician prescribes your child an antibiotic, it's important to give your child the medication exactly as it is prescribed. So ask questions. The CDC recommends the following:

- Why does my child need an antibiotic?
- What is the name of the drug?
- When should I give the medication and for how long?
- Are there food, drinks or activities my child should avoid while taking this medication?
- Does the medication cause side effects? What are they, and how can I prevent them?
- Can this medication be taken safely while also taking another prescription or non-prescription medicine?

Alternatives to antibiotics

When an antibiotic is not prescribed, you definitely want to do something to help your child feel better. Here are some tips recommended by the CDC:

- Ask your pediatrician why an antibiotic is not being prescribed and what else you can do to help your child feel better.
- Your doctor can suggest therapeutic options such as decongestants, cough medicine or anti-fever medication.
- Make sure your child gets plenty of rest.
- Provide plenty of liquids. Children lose fluids when they are sick. Replace these fluids with water and clear juices.
- Talk with your pediatrician. Update your doctor on your child's condition if things don't get better in a few days.

Sidebar

Ear Infections

Ear infections in children are tricky, because not all ear infections are the same. Ear infections are usually classified as either acute otitis media (AOM) or otitis media with effusion (OME). It is important for your doctor to diagnosis what kind of ear infection your child has so he/she will know how to treat it. Most children with ear infections have OME, which is fluid in the ear without signs of an acute middle-ear infection. Half of young children with colds get OME. Antibiotics are not useful for the initial treatment of OME. Although, they may be worth a try if OME lasts for longer than three months. Antibiotics are appropriate for AOM with fluid in the ear and clear signs of acute illness.