

Talk to your doctor about safe antibiotic use.



What is the right way to take antibiotics?

If you need antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed. Never save your antibiotics for later use or share them with family or friends.*

Taking antibiotics only when needed helps keep us healthy now, helps fight antibiotic resistance and ensures that these life-saving drugs will be available for future generations.*

Talk with your health care provider if you have any questions about your antibiotics, including how they could interact with other medications you are taking, or if you develop any side effects.*

Don't antibiotics cure everything?

Antibiotics are powerful medicines, but they cannot cure everything. Antibiotics do not work against illnesses that are caused by a virus. They do not help illnesses such as the following:

- Common colds
- Influenza (flu)
- Most cases of acute bronchitis
- Most sore throats not caused by strep
- Runny noses
- Most ear infections

These illnesses usually go away by themselves. Ask your doctor what you can do to feel better.**

For members and insured family members of:



Why does taking antibiotics lead to antibiotic resistance?

Any time you take antibiotics, they can cause side effects and contribute to the development of antibiotic resistance. Antibiotic resistance is one of the most urgent threats to the public's health.*

Always remember:

- Antibiotic resistance does not mean the body is becoming resistant to antibiotics; it means bacteria are developing the ability to defeat the antibiotics designed to kill them*
- When bacteria become resistant, antibiotics cannot fight them and the bacteria multiply*
- Some resistant bacteria can be harder to treat and can spread to other people*

To learn more about antibiotic prescribing and use, visit www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.

How can I stay healthy?

You can stay healthy and help keep others healthy by:

- Cleaning hands by washing with soap and water for 20 seconds or using a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol*
- Covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or using the inside of your elbow*
- Getting recommended vaccines, such as the flu vaccine*

Talk to your health care provider about steps you can take to help prevent illness.



*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Be Antibiotics Aware Partner Toolkit. <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/week/toolkit.html>. Page last reviewed November 1, 2021.

**Cigna Healthcare. "Using Antibiotics Wisely." Wellness Library. <https://www.cigna.com/individuals-families/health-wellness/hw/using-antibiotics-wisely-hw63605spec>. Page last updated July 1, 2021.

This information is for educational purposes only and is not medical advice. Always consult with your doctor for appropriate examinations, treatment, testing and care recommendations.

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