

# Antibiotics aren't always the answer



For many people, as soon as they start to feel a tickle in the back of their throat or their nose begins to feel blocked, they immediately schedule an appointment with their doctor to get a prescription for antibiotics.

## Misuse and overuse of antibiotics

Antibiotics are antimicrobial substances that are used to treat bacterial infections by inhibiting the growth and spread of the bacteria in the body, like in the treatment of bacterial infections such as pneumonia. However, one of the greatest health mistakes that many individuals are guilty of is the use of antibiotics in the treatment of non-bacterial infections, specifically in the treatment of colds and flu.

Most colds, flu, and sore throats occur as a result of a viral infection and so going on a course of antibiotics for any of these conditions is not only ineffective, but can also do more harm than good. The overuse of antibiotics, specifically using antibiotics to treat viral infections, can speed up the development of antibiotic resistance, which means antibiotics won't rid your body of the bacteria they're used to treat.

## Not finishing a course of antibiotics

A full course of antibiotics is necessary to completely rid the body of the bacteria that is causing the infection.

However, some people may stop using them as soon as they start feeling a little better. Failure to complete them can result in you having to go on another course because the bacterial infection was not entirely destroyed by the first round.

## Keeping extra antibiotic pills for next time you get sick

Using leftover antibiotics the next time you're ill can be extremely dangerous, particularly if it's a specific antibiotic. If it's to treat a certain bacterial infection and you take it for the wrong condition, it could result in your condition worsening over time. Also, taking leftover antibiotic pills could lead to an increased risk of developing antibiotic resistance to that specific antibiotic.

Antibiotic resistance is a major concern amongst the global health community. Take the initiative and question your doctor when they prescribe antibiotics to you, so that you are sure that you are being treated for a bacterial infection. Also ensure that you fully adhere to the instructions on how to take your antibiotics, and more importantly ensure that you complete the full dose of antibiotics.