

Antibiotics are not always the answer

- Antibiotics are used to treat bacterial infections. When your child is sick with a cough, sore throat or cold he or she probably has a virus.
- Common viral infections such as coughs, sore throats or colds cannot be cured by taking antibiotics.
- When your child recovers from a common viral infection, it is because his or her body fights the illness on its own.
- Using antibiotics when they are not needed can harm your child.
- Handwashing is the single best way to prevent the spread of illness.

Ask about the right treatment for your child's illness.



Commonly asked questions

My child has had a cough on and off for a long time. Shouldn't my child get antibiotics to get rid of this?

Children can have up to **eight** viral cough illnesses each year, and the cough and runny nose commonly last **one to two** weeks each time. Being sick on and off for a long time doesn't necessarily mean that he or she has a bacterial infection needing antibiotics.

If mucus from the nose changes from clear to yellow or green, does this mean that my child needs antibiotics?

Yellow or green mucus does not mean that your child has a bacterial infection. It is normal for the mucus to get thick and change color during a viral cold.

Should I ever give my child antibiotics?

Antibiotics are very important medicines for treating infections caused by bacteria. If an antibiotic is prescribed, make sure you give your child the entire course and never save antibiotics for later use.

How do I know if my child's illness is caused by bacteria or a virus?

If you think that your child might need treatment, you should contact your doctor or health care provider for a diagnosis. But remember, colds are caused by viruses and should not be treated with antibiotics.



For more information:

- ✓ **Talk to your doctor or other health care provider.**
- ✓ **Visit our Web site**
www.healthoregon.org/antibiotics



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