

What are antibiotics?

Antibiotics are a type of medication used to treat infections caused by bacteria. Antibiotics are not able to treat infections caused by viruses, such as the common cold, flu, or a sore throat.

Why is my child's virus taking so long to go away?

If your child is suffering from a cold, cough, sore throat, flu, COVID-19, or other respiratory illness, they are sick with one of the many viruses that circulate every day in our community. These viruses can be uncomfortable and inconvenient, and they may take a significant amount of time to resolve.

The average common cold lasts anywhere from 7-10 days, but can last as long as 2 weeks. Medications to shorten the length or severity of a cold are not available, but you can talk to your child's pediatrician about ways to help keep them comfortable.

Why not treat with antibiotics, just in case?

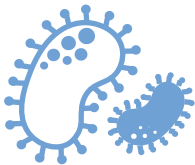
If we over-prescribe antibiotics when they aren't needed, something called antibiotic resistance can occur. Antibiotic resistance means that the antibiotic medication that would normally be used to treat a bacterial infection may no longer work. The resistant bacteria can be spread to others, which makes it more difficult to treat a community overall, over time.

Additionally, antibiotics can cause side effects in 10% of kids, including as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, yeast infections, rash, or allergic reactions. It's important to weigh the risks and benefits of these possibilities before starting an unnecessary medication.

Should I give my child cold medicine?

Cold medicines can cause harm to children. The risks associated with using them in young children greatly outweigh the benefits. Children under 4 years old should not be given cough medicine, and it should only be given to children 4-6 years old if recommended by their pediatrician. Children 6 years and older may use age-appropriate cough medicine if dosing instructions are closely followed.

Is my child's infection caused by a **bacteria** or a **virus**?



BACTERIA

Skin infections
Strep throat
Whooping cough
UTI

Antibiotics? **YES**

CAN BE EITHER

Sinus infections
Ear infections
Bronchitis
Pneumonia

Antibiotics? **MAYBE**



VIRUS

Common cold
Sore throat
Flu
COVID-19

Antibiotics? **NO**