

Healthy Habits

Tips for reaching and maintaining your optimum state of health



Resistance Kills!

Do you really need an antibiotic for a cold or the flu? What happens when you take unnecessary antibiotics? Here are some alarming facts:

- In Hampton Roads, bacterial resistance is 50% higher than national rates.¹
- Overuse of antibiotics is the main reason for this rising rate of drug resistant bacteria.²
- Approximately 50-60 percent of all patients with viral infections use antibiotics.³
- Antibiotics do not help infections caused by viruses, such as the flu or a cold.⁴
- The danger of antibiotic resistance is that once-treatable infections may and have become deadly.⁵

Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria that cause infection are not killed by the antibiotics taken to stop the infection. The bacteria survive and continue to multiply causing more harm. Widespread use of antibiotics promotes the spread of antibiotic resistance. And while antibiotic resistant bacteria have been around a long time, the scenario today is different from just 10 years ago. A recent FDA article states that the number of bacteria

resistant to many different antibiotics has increased, in many cases, tenfold or more.⁵

So, how do you know if you have a bacterial or viral infection? Your healthcare provider can evaluate whether you have a bacterial or viral infection based on your symptoms and/or lab tests. Here are some common symptoms and whether they are related to a bacterial or viral infection:

Symptoms	Bacterial	Viral
Common Cold		X
Runny Nose/Sneezing		X
Sinus Congestion		X
Flu		X
Aches and Pains	X	X
Temp. of 100 +	X	X
Headache	X	X
Bladder/Kidney Infection	X	

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that about 100 million courses of antibiotics are provided by office-based doctors each year. Approximately half of those are unnecessary; being prescribed for colds, coughs or other viral infections. Also according to the CDC, virtually all significant bacterial infections in the world are becoming resistant to antibiotic treatment.⁵

Here's what you can do to help:

- Don't demand an antibiotic when your healthcare provider determines one isn't appropriate. Ask about ways to relieve your symptoms.
- Never take an antibiotic for a viral symptoms such as cold, a cough or the flu.
- Take medicine exactly as your healthcare provider prescribes. If he or she prescribes an antibiotic, take it until it is gone, even if you're feeling better.
- Don't take leftover antibiotics or antibiotics prescribed for someone else. These antibiotics may not be appropriate for your current symptoms. Taking the wrong medicine could delay getting correct treatment and allow bacteria to multiply.

DID YOU KNOW....that antibiotics do not help infections caused by viruses, like the flu or the common cold? Yet, 50-60% of patients with viral infections receive antibiotics from their doctor - often at the patient's request. For these reasons, your doctor will no longer prescribe an antibiotic for the flu or other viral infection. *Please follow your doctor's advice and don't request an antibiotic for a viral infection.*

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