

# IMPROVING ANTIBIOTIC USE



**BE  
ANTIBIOTICS  
AWARE**

SMART USE, BEST CARE

## Do I really need antibiotics?



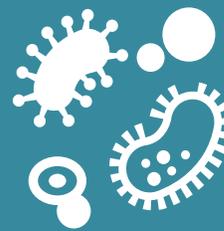
### SAY YES TO ANTIBIOTICS

when needed for certain infections caused by **bacteria**.



### SAY NO TO ANTIBIOTICS

for **viruses**, such as colds and flu, or runny noses, even if the mucus is thick, yellow or green. Antibiotics also won't help for some common bacterial infections including most cases of bronchitis, many sinus infections, and some ear infections.



Antibiotics are only needed for treating certain infections caused by bacteria.

Antibiotics do **NOT** work on viruses.

## Do antibiotics have side effects?

Any time antibiotics are used, they can cause side effects. However, antibiotics can save lives. When you need antibiotics, the benefits outweigh the risks of side effects. If you don't need antibiotics, you shouldn't take them because they can cause harm.

### Common side effects of antibiotics include:



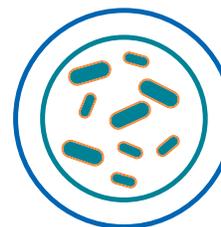
Rash



Dizziness



Nausea



Yeast Infection



Diarrhea

Get immediate medical help if you experience severe diarrhea. It could be a symptom of a **C. difficile infection** (also called **C. diff**), which can lead to severe colon damage and death. People can also have severe and life-threatening allergic reactions.

**If you experience side effects, follow up with your healthcare professional.**

**1 OUT OF 5**

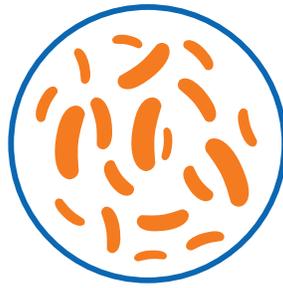
medication-related visits to the emergency room are from reactions to antibiotics.

# What are antibiotic-resistant bacteria?

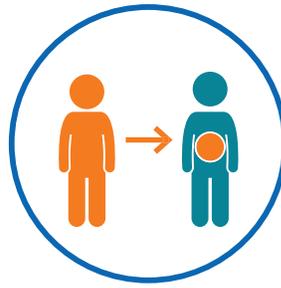
Antibiotics can save lives, but anytime antibiotics are used, they can lead to antibiotic resistance. Antibiotic resistance occurs when germs like bacteria and fungi develop the ability to defeat the drugs designed to kill them. If antibiotics lose their effectiveness, then we lose the ability to treat infections, like those that lead to sepsis.



Bacteria, not the body, develop 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.

More than **2.8 million** antibiotic-resistant infections occur in the United States each year, and more than **35,000 people** die as a result.

# Can I feel better without antibiotics?

Respiratory viruses usually go away in a week or two.

**To stay healthy and keep others healthy, you can:**



Clean your hands



Stay home when sick



Avoid close contact with people who are sick



Get recommended vaccines



Cover your coughs and sneezes



Avoid touching your face



If you need antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed

Talk to your healthcare professional about what you can do to feel better.

To learn more about antibiotic prescribing and use, visit [www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use](http://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use).

