



# Antibiotics aren't always the answer



## Six simple and smart facts about antibiotic use

- 1 Antibiotics are life-saving drugs.**  
Using antibiotics wisely is the best way to preserve their strength for future bacterial illnesses.
- 2 Antibiotics only treat bacterial infection.**  
If you or your child has a viral infection such as a cold, talk to a doctor or pharmacist about symptom relief. This may include over-the-counter medicine, a humidifier or warm liquids.
- 3 Some ear and sinus infections DO NOT require an antibiotic.**  
A doctor can determine what type of ear or sinus infection you or your child has and if antibiotics will help. The doctor may follow expert guidelines to wait a couple of days before prescribing antibiotics as you or your child may get better without them.
- 4 Most sore throats DO NOT require an antibiotic.**  
Only one in five children and only 5 percent of adults seen by a doctor for a sore throat have strep throat. Your doctor can only confirm strep throat by running a test.
- 5 Green-colored mucus is NOT a sign that an antibiotic is needed.**  
As the body's immune system fights off an infection, mucus can change color. This is normal and does not mean an antibiotic is needed.
- 6 There are potential risks when taking any prescription drug.**  
Antibiotic use can cause complications, ranging from an upset stomach to a serious allergic reaction. Your doctor will weigh the risks and benefits before prescribing an antibiotic.

**Get Smart symptom relief tips and tools**  
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