



Antibiotics Facts

When your child is sick you do everything you can to help him or her feel better. Sometimes, however, antibiotics are not the answer. Antibiotics don't help when your child is sick with a virus, such as those that cause colds, flu, most sore throats, bronchitis, and *many* sinus and ear infections. For those illnesses, they will not cure the infection, will not help your child feel better, and will not keep others from catching your child's illness.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimate that half of antibiotics prescriptions are unnecessary and can actually do harm. Unwanted side effects can range from mild abdominal discomfort to antibiotic resistance — when bacteria are able to resist the effects of the medication and continue to cause harm. Diarrhea is a common side effect of antibiotics and some antibiotics can lead to more serious infections. For this reason the CDC recommends giving your child antibiotics only when necessary.

Our Focus: careful management of antibiotics

At InterMed, we're very careful with the use of antibiotics, and prescribe them only when appropriate or necessary.

- If your child is ill, discuss treatment options with your healthcare provider.
- If your child does not have a bacterial infection, ask how to relieve their symptoms. There are often many options to help alleviate symptoms.

As with all of your child's care, speak with your provider if you have questions.

Prevention is the best medicine

A few simple steps go a long way to keep you and your loved ones healthy:

- Get recommended vaccines and flu shots.
- Wash your hands often. Use plain soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Wash for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid antibacterial soaps.
- Wash before preparing or eating food.
- Wash after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, sneezing, coughing, handling garbage and coming home from public places.
- Wash before and after treating a cut or wound or being near a sick person.
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve (not your hands).
- Minimize contact with people who are sick. If you're sick, limit contact with others.

See the reverse side of a list of commonly-asked questions about Antibiotics.

Frequently Asked Questions About Antibiotics

How do I know if my child has a viral or bacterial infection?

Ask your child's healthcare provider and follow his or her advice on what to do about your child's illness. Remember, colds are caused by viruses and should not be treated with antibiotics.

Does this mean I should never give my child antibiotics?

Antibiotics are very strong medicines and should be used to treat bacterial infections. Your healthcare provider will prescribe antibiotics if your child has a bacterial infection.

The mucus from my child's nose changed from clear to yellow or green. Does this mean that my child needs an antibiotic?

No. Yellow or green mucus does not mean that your child has a bacterial infection. It is normal for mucus to thicken and change color during a viral cold.

Why is my provider so careful about antibiotic use?

Overuse and misuse of antibiotics threatens the usefulness of these important drugs. Decreasing inappropriate antibiotic use is a key strategy to control antibiotic resistance.

Antibiotic resistance in children is of particular concern because they have the highest rates of antibiotic use and often have fewer antibiotic choices since some antibiotics cannot be safely given to children.

Using antibiotics appropriately is the best thing for your child's health, your health, and the health of those around you.

Source: Centers for Disease Control. Learn more at [CDC.gov](https://www.cdc.gov)