

Facts about Antibiotic-Resistant Bacteria

For diseases caused by bacteria, doctors may prescribe an antibiotic. Antibiotics kill most bacteria.

Bacteria can become resistant to antibiotics. **Antibiotics will not kill bacteria that are resistant to them.**

Using antibiotics when they are not needed, for example, for colds and flu – that are caused by viruses – can lead to antibiotic resistance.

Using antibacterial hand soaps and antibacterial household cleaners can also lead to antibiotic resistance.

Remember, it is bacteria that become resistant to antibiotics, not you.

Even healthy people who have never taken an antibiotic can become infected with antibiotic resistant bacteria.

Antibiotic resistant bacteria are becoming more common.

Antibiotic resistant bacteria do not necessarily cause more serious infections than other bacteria.

For information about Methicillin-Resistant Staphylococcus aureus, see page 42.



What to Do at Home

- Use antibiotics wisely. If your doctor prescribes an antibiotic for your child, give all of the medicine, even if your child begins to feel better.
- Do not expect to get an antibiotic for every cold or sore throat. Most of these are caused by viruses. Antibiotics do not kill viruses.
- Let your doctor decide if an antibiotic is needed and which antibiotic is best.
- Be patient. Most viral illnesses will take 4-5 days before getting better and up to 3 weeks for a full recovery.
- Always wash your hands after being with someone who is sick. Remind others to wash their hands.

For more information about antibiotic resistance, visit the Do Bugs Need Drugs? website at: www.dobugsneeddrugs.org