

# Safe Use of Antibiotics



## Contact Info:

[www.healthoregon.org/antibiotics/patients.cfm](http://www.healthoregon.org/antibiotics/patients.cfm)  
[www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/community/](http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/community/)

### When does my child need antibiotics?

- Antibiotics only help when the infection is caused by bacteria.
- When your child has a cough, sore throat, or cold, he or she probably has a viral infection and will be able to fight off the infection on his or her own.
- Your health care provider can tell which kind of infection your child has and whether he or she needs antibiotics. Remember, colds are caused by viruses and won't be cured by antibiotics.

### Why not take antibiotics just in case?

- They won't help your child's symptoms.
- Taking antibiotics when they aren't really needed can be harmful. Each time they take antibiotics, children are more likely to carry resistant germs. If they get infected with resistant germs, they might need to take more expensive antibiotics or have to get antibiotics in the hospital.

### If an antibiotic is prescribed . . .

- Make sure you give your child the antibiotic every day for the total number of days your health care provider prescribes it.
- Never give your child leftover antibiotics that have not been prescribed for him or her.

### Prevention

- Hand washing is the best way to prevent the spread of illness.

For more information about the growing problem of antibiotic resistance, visit the Department of Human Services web site at : [www.healthoregon.org/antibiotics](http://www.healthoregon.org/antibiotics)



Illness	Usual Cause		Antibiotic Needed?
	Virus	Bacteria	
Colds & Flu	●		No
Runny Nose	●		No
Cough	●		No
Bronchitis	●		No
Sinus Infection	●	●	Maybe
Ear Infection	●	●	Maybe
Pneumonia	●	●	Usually
Strep Throat		●	Yes

