

Imagine a World Without Antibiotics



- You know how you are FEELING better than anyone else
- Your doctor knows what the CAUSE is, and what to treat you with, better than anyone else.

Listen, and discuss your illness, but do not ask for or demand antibiotics
 – they may well cause you and others significant harm

Illness	Usual Cause		Antibiotic Needed
	Viruses	Bacteria	
Cold/Runny Nose	✓		NO
Bronchitis/Chest Cold (in otherwise healthy children and adults)	✓		NO
Whooping Cough		✓	Yes
Flu	✓		NO
Strep Throat		✓	Yes
Sore Throat (except strep)	✓		NO
Fluid in the Middle Ear (otitis media with effusion)	✓		NO
Urinary Tract Infection		✓	Yes

Why don't I need an antibiotic? How do I prevent antibiotic resistance?

Many nasty infections are caused by **viruses** including influenza, colds, bronchitis, most coughs, most sore throats, tummy bugs (viral gastroenteritis) and many ear and sinus infections. **Antibiotics do not kill viruses**, so will not help against them, will not cure, and will not prevent spread of viral infections to others.

Many nasty illnesses are not caused by infections at all, such as asthma, dermatitis and eczema, so an antibiotic will not help with those either. Occasionally these can become infected later – your doctor knows when this has happened.

Q. What are the problems with using antibiotics when they are not essential?

A. Because every antibiotic use will cause harm including killing off your good, protective, beneficial bacteria in your gut that are essential for your immune system to work well. Antibiotic use breeds resistant bacteria in us. As more bacteria get exposed to antibiotics, more become resistant, “which means antibiotics won't work anymore when we really need them for something serious”. Antibiotics also have toxic side effects and other unintended consequences including effecting our weight, moods, autoimmune illnesses, etc. Irritable bowel disease risk increases in direct proportion to the number of antibiotic courses taken as a child, only 3-4 antibiotic courses can double this risk, especially in children. If you use antibiotics for a virus you are risking all of these side effects, short and longer term, for no benefit to yourself or your child. Instead, you may well be causing significant unintended harm.

Ask your doctor if there is anything you can take to feel better and get relief from your symptoms without using antibiotics. The best treatment may well be relieving your symptoms and allowing time for your body's immune system to work, rather than taking an antibiotic.

“I didn't know there were other options besides antibiotics, which are hard on our gut flora and immune system, and they build up antibiotic resistance in us. This means that if we take too many antibiotics, then they won't work anymore if there's a time we really need them for something serious”.

Q. Can we always avoid using antibiotics?

A. No. We must use common sense, and obtain professional advice. There will be times when antibiotics are necessary, and we will be thankful for those times. But because research now shows antibiotics can cause significant harm including to our immunity, *and* build up bacterial resistance that keep them from working if we ever *really* need them, better to keep those times few and far between.

Avoid Killing Good Bacteria



Antibiotic

Resistance



Every antibiotic use helps breed bacterial resistance and they are rapidly losing their effectiveness for both common and serious, life threatening bacterial infections. **Many bacteria are now resistant to all antibiotics – i.e. ‘superbugs’** Doctors are now much more careful about when antibiotics are needed because of the serious antibiotic resistance that is developing, and the significant side effects they cause. Research clearly shows that they have been over used.

The most well-known superbug is **MRSA** (Methicillin Resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) and it is now more commonly carried by even healthy people in the community. But there are now many more superbugs than just MRSA. MRSA can cause anything from skin infections to septicaemia or pneumonia. This means that even small cuts infected with MRSA or other superbugs are becoming ever more difficult to treat with antibiotics, and increasingly there are no antibiotic options left because of this antibiotic resistance.

The World Health Organisation warns that a **“post-antibiotic” era is rapidly approaching** in which common infections can no longer be treated with tried and trusted antibiotics, turning the clock back to a time when even a slight cut or graze might prove fatal.

“Antimicrobial resistance is not a future threat looming on the horizon. It is here, right now, and the consequences are devastating” - Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organisation

Antibiotic resistance has been described as a “ticking time-bomb” - Dame Sally Davies, the UK Chief Medical Officer.
She added that it posed a “catastrophic threat” on a par with terrorism and climate change, only sooner