



# Antibiotics can't kill the common cold

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**SPRINGFIELD** – Antibiotics save lives and are critical tools for treating a number of common and more serious infections. However, antibiotics are often used when they should not, which can cause them to stop working. Up to 50 percent of all prescribed antibiotics are not needed or are not effective as prescribed. Each year in the United States, at least two million people become infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria and at least 23,000 die.

“Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria no longer respond to the drugs designed to kill them,” said Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) Director Nirav D. Shah, M.D., J.D. “Antibiotic resistant bacteria are much deadlier and more difficult to treat. Taking antibiotics when they are not needed can cause side effects such as rashes, nausea, diarrhea, yeast infections, and dizziness. It can also lead to antibiotic resistance, one of the most urgent threats to the public’s health.”

To help stop the misuse of antibiotics, IDPH is leading the statewide [Precious Drugs & Scary Bugs Campaign](#) to promote appropriate antibiotic use in doctors’ offices. During Antibiotic Awareness Week, IDPH urges people to educate themselves, their families, and their communities about antibiotic resistance. Improving the way health care providers prescribe antibiotics, and how people take them, will help fight antibiotic resistance. Preventing antibiotic resistance will help ensure these lifesaving drugs will continue to work in the future.

Antibiotics do not work on viruses, such as those that cause colds, flu, or runny noses, even if the mucus is thick, yellow, or green. And taking antibiotics will not make you feel better if you have a virus. Antibiotics are only needed for treating infections caused by bacteria, but even some bacterial infections get better without antibiotics, including many sinus infections and some ear infections.

How you can help prevent antibiotic resistance:

- Ask your health care provider if there are other steps you can take to feel better without using an antibiotic.
- Do not ask for antibiotics when your health care provider thinks you do not need them.
- Take the antibiotics exactly as your health care professional tells you.
- Stay up to date on your recommended vaccines to help prevent illness.
- Wash your hands regularly to stop the spread of disease.

### **Do I need an antibiotic?**

<b>YES</b>	<b>MAYBE</b>	<b>NO</b>
Bacteria	Bacteria or Virus	Virus
Strep Throat	Bronchitis	Flu
Tuberculosis	Ear Infection	Colds
Whooping Cough	Sinus Infection	Sore Throat
Urinary Tract Infection		

Join the antibiotic resistance conversation November 12-18, 2018 by following @CDCgov and @IDPH for more updates. More information about Antibiotics Awareness Week can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/week/overview.html>.