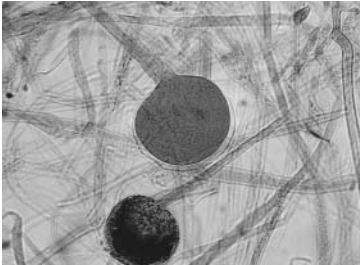


## T.I.P.S. Sheet - Antibiotics

### *Tools Important to Patient Success*



*Penicillin, shown at many times its actual size, is a common antibiotic.*

### How do antibiotics work?

Antibiotics treat bacterial infections by killing bacteria or inhibiting their growth. Antibiotics aren't able to kill the viruses, which cause colds, flu, most coughs, sore throats and bronchitis. People usually recover from viral infections in 1-2 weeks. Only your doctor can determine if you have a viral or bacterial infection.

### When do I need an antibiotic?

Condition	Need antibiotics?	Reason
Sinus infection	Sometimes	Infections caused by viruses or bacteria have similar symptoms. If symptoms are severe and last more than two weeks, a bacterial infection may be present.
Cold or flu	No	Colds and flu are caused by viruses. Antibiotics don't work against viral infections.
Strep throat	Yes	Strep throat is caused by Streptococcus bacteria, which is treated with antibiotics.
Ear infection	Sometimes	Ear infections may be treated with an antibiotic depending on the severity and type of infection.
Bronchitis	Sometimes	Bronchitis is usually caused by a virus. If complications or a bacterial infection are present, an antibiotic may be necessary.

## Taking your antibiotics

**Take as directed.** Follow the directions on your prescription label carefully and be aware of any food or drink to avoid.

**Do NOT stop taking until gone.** Even if your symptoms have disappeared, continue to take your medication. If you stop taking your medication early, any remaining bacteria will grow stronger and future bacterial infections will be harder to treat.

**Take at least 2 hours apart from your other medications.** Other medications can decrease the effectiveness of antibiotics.

**Contact your doctor immediately if you experience an allergic reaction.** Symptoms of an allergic reaction include rashes, swelling or tingling of the face, lips, or tongue, or trouble breathing.

## Possible side effects

If you experience any of the following side effects, continue taking your antibiotic as directed. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if any side effect becomes bothersome or severe.

- Increased skin sensitivity to sunlight (Wear extra protection when outside)
- Upset stomach (Take antibiotic with a full glass of water or food)
- Diarrhea

## Remembering to take your medicine

- Associate taking your medication with a daily event such as eating dinner, brushing your teeth or going to bed.
- Use a daily pill organizer.

## Additional Resources

For a medication review with a pharmacist, call HealthPartners CareSpan Connect at 952-803-5469 (TTY, 1-800-871-9243).