

# IMPROVING ANTIBIOTIC USE



**BE  
ANTIBIOTICS  
AWARE**  
SMART USE, BEST CARE

## Do I really need antibiotics?



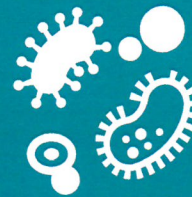
### SAY YES TO ANTIBIOTICS

when needed for certain infections caused by **bacteria**.



### SAY NO TO ANTIBIOTICS

for **viruses**, such as colds and flu, or runny noses, even if the mucus is thick, yellow or green. Antibiotics also won't help for some common bacterial infections including most cases of bronchitis, many sinus infections, and some ear infections.



Antibiotics are only needed for treating certain infections caused by bacteria.

Antibiotics do **NOT** work on viruses.

## Do antibiotics have side effects?

Anytime antibiotics are used, they can cause side effects. When antibiotics aren't needed, they won't help you, and the side effects could still hurt you. Common side effects of antibiotics can include:



Rash



Dizziness



Nausea



Yeast Infections



Diarrhea

More serious side effects include *Clostridium difficile* infection (also called *C. difficile* or *C. diff*), which causes diarrhea that can lead to severe colon damage and death. People can also have severe and life-threatening allergic reactions.

**Antibiotics save lives. When a patient needs antibiotics, the benefits outweigh the risks of side effects.**

# 1 out of 5

medication-related visits to the ED are from reactions to antibiotics.

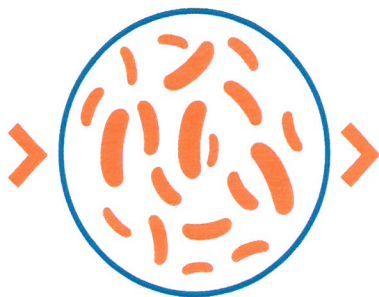


# What are antibiotic-resistant bacteria?

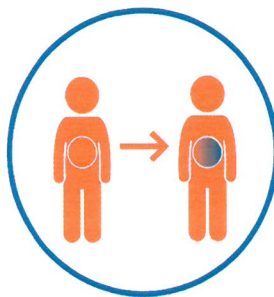
Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria no longer respond to the drugs designed to kill them. Anytime antibiotics are used, they can cause antibiotic resistance.



Bacteria, not the body, become resistant to the antibiotics designed to kill them.



When bacteria become resistant, antibiotics cannot fight them, and the bacteria multiply.



Some resistant bacteria can be harder to treat and can spread to other people.

Each year in the United States, at least **2 million people** get infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria. At least **23,000 people** die as a result.

# Can I feel better without antibiotics?

Respiratory viruses usually go away in a week or two without treatment. To stay healthy and keep others healthy, you can:



Clean Hands



Cover Coughs



Stay Home  
When Sick



Get  
Recommended  
Vaccines

To learn more about antibiotic prescribing and use, visit [www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use](http://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use).



**pennsylvania**  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH