



## Antibiotics Facts

Your provider may prescribe antibiotics to prevent or treat an infection. Antibiotics are very effective when correctly used to fight specific bacterial illnesses, such as strep throat, whooping cough and urinary tract infections.

However, antibiotics don't help when you're sick with a virus, such as those that cause colds, flu, most sore throats, bronchitis, and many sinus and ear infections.

The Centers for Disease Control estimate that half of antibiotics prescriptions are unnecessary and can actually do harm. Unwanted side effects can range from mild abdominal discomfort to antibiotic resistance — when bacteria are able to resist the effects of the medication and continue to cause harm. Diarrhea is a common side effect of antibiotics and some antibiotics can lead to a serious infection called c. difficile colitis.

### Our focus: careful management of antibiotics

At InterMed, we're very careful with the use of antibiotics, and prescribe them only when appropriate or necessary.

- If you're ill, discuss treatment options with your doctor.
- If you don't have a bacterial infection, ask how to relieve your symptoms. There are often many options to help alleviate your symptoms.

Using antibiotics appropriately is the best thing for your health, your family's health, and the health of those around you.

As with all of your care, speak with your provider if you have questions.

### **Prevention is the best medicine**

*A few simple steps go a long way to keep you and your loved ones healthy:*

- Get recommended vaccines and flu shots.
- Wash your hands often. Use plain soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Wash for at least 20 seconds.
- Avoid antibacterial soaps.
- Wash before preparing or eating food.
- Wash after using the bathroom, changing a diaper, sneezing, coughing, handling garbage and coming home from public places.
- Wash before and after treating a cut or wound or being near a sick person.
- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve (not your hands).
- Minimize contact with people who are sick. If you're sick, limit contact with others.