

UNDERSTANDING INFECTIONS: VIRAL OR BACTERIAL?

There are two types of infections that your child may have: viral and bacterial. Viral infections are caused by viruses, tiny organisms that infect the body. Viruses cause a lot of the illnesses we're most familiar with, such as the common cold, sore throats, and coughs. In fact, 85% of sore throats are caused by viruses.

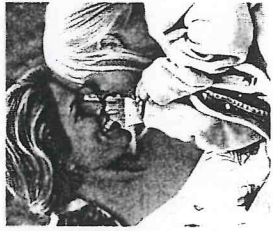
Bacterial infections are caused by tiny bacteria which invade the body. One example of a bacterial infection is "strep throat," a sore throat caused by a type of bacteria called *Streptococcus*. Only 15% of sore throats are strep throat. Bacteria can also cause infections such as bronchitis and pneumonia. These types of infections generally require antibiotics.

Antibiotics should *not* be used to treat viral infections because they do not kill the virus and are useless in treating viral infections. Viral infections that cause the common cold and sore throat usually last about a week and must run their course before they go away.

THE GOOD AND THE BAD ABOUT ANTIBIOTICS

Antibiotics are drugs used to treat bacterial infections. They are one of the most important medical advances of the 20th century. When used properly, antibiotics can treat many very serious diseases such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, and typhoid. However, when used improperly, antibiotics can actually be harmful.

RESISTANT BACTERIA: HOW TO PROTECT YOUR CHILD



The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends against using antibiotics

for viral infections. Yet millions of unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions are written each year for colds, sore throats, and other common viral infections. This can lead to the development of resistant bacteria, sometimes called "superbugs."

Superbugs are bacteria that are so strong they become resistant to antibiotics. These superbugs often multiply and may spread to other family members or the community, making these infections impossible to treat and control with ordinary antibiotics. In fact, superbugs can cause serious infections that may require hospitalization or may not be treatable at all. The more your child is given antibiotics unnecessarily, the greater the chance that he or she may become infected with resistant bacteria. Understanding this is the first step toward taking the best care of your child and your family.

Resistant bacteria, or superbugs, are bacteria that are so strong they cannot be controlled with ordinary antibiotics. Superbugs develop when antibiotics are used too often and/or when they aren't necessary.

BE PROACTIVE: TAKE STEPS TO TREAT SYMPTOMS

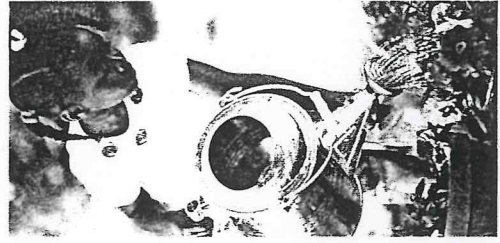
First, it is important to talk to your healthcare professional about whether or not your child's infection requires antibiotic treatment. Then, you can make your child more comfortable by treating the symptoms of an infection, whether it is bacterial or viral.

For cold and flu...

- Often, a cold makes a child uncomfortable with a runny nose, cough, congestion, headache, and muscle aches and pains. Flu symptoms are similar to cold symptoms, although generally more severe and may also include fever, chills, fatigue, and weakness. *Remember, antibiotics have no effect on colds or flu, and therefore, should not be used.*

For ear infections...

- There are several types of ear infections. Many of these infections require antibiotic treatment, but some do not. *Always check with your healthcare professional if your child is experiencing an earache.*



For sore throat...

- Sore throats are often caused by viruses. *Only strep throat requires antibiotics.*

Talk to your healthcare professional about making your child more comfortable by relieving symptoms with over-the-counter medicines such as Children's Advil[®], Robitussin[®], and Dimetapp[®].