

# FAQs on Antibiotics

## Patient Information



## Frequently Asked Questions About Antibiotics

### 1. What are antibiotics?

Antibiotics are medicines which are used to treat bacterial infections and may work by either killing or slowing down the growth of bacteria.

### 2. Why are antibiotics important?

Antibiotics help in controlling the germs in your body which make you sick. Note that not all infections require antibiotics for their control. Your doctor can best decide when you should use antibiotics.

### 3. How does the physician decide when antibiotics should be given?

Your physician may ask for certain lab tests before starting antibiotics. These tests are important to determine whether you need antibiotics, and if yes, which antibiotic will work best. Your physician may change your antibiotic during the course of your treatment, based on your condition and further tests.

### 4. What information should you provide to your physician to make the antibiotic treatment safer?

Allergies are common with medicines. Your physician must know if you have any known allergies. In addition, many medicines can interact with each other. Let your physician know what medicines you are taking currently or have taken in the recent past. Inform your physician if you have any chronic disease, if you are pregnant or are breastfeeding.

### 5. What are the side-effects of antibiotics?

Antibiotics can have mild to serious side effects. The most common side effects are nausea, vomiting, loose motions, abdominal pain and change of taste in your mouth. If you think you are having a reaction or side effect to your antibiotic, please inform your physician.

## 6. What is the best way to take my antibiotics?

- Wash your hands before taking any medicines, including antibiotics.
- Take your antibiotic at the recommended time.
- If you miss your antibiotic dose, skip it.
- Complete the course of antibiotics as prescribed by your doctor.

## 7. What questions should you ask your doctor about the prescribed antibiotic?

- Is it safe to take this antibiotic with other medications or supplements (e.g., vitamins) which I am taking?
- Are there any special directions I need to know about taking this antibiotic? For example, should I take it with food?
- How will I be monitored to know whether my infection is responding to the antibiotic or not?