

Resisting Antibiotics

Antibiotic medicines have been fighting serious bacterial diseases and saving lives for decades. Today, however, there are few new antibiotics being developed. At the same time, massive use of antibiotics has increased the rate and spread of resistant bacteria. The result is that most major bacterial infections are becoming resistant to commonly used antibiotics.

Misuse or overuse of antibiotics is partly to blame for highly contagious and deadly superbugs (including MRSA, CRE and Shigella). Some bacteria are naturally resistant to certain antibiotics; others mutate and become harder to treat.

6 Steps to Safe Antibiotic Use

Taking antibiotics you don't need can lead to antibiotic resistance. Before using an antibiotic, review the following guidelines:

- 1 Only use antibiotics for *bacterial* infections. They're ineffective for *viral* illnesses, including colds and flu.
- 2 Take your antibiotic exactly as prescribed. Use all of it, even if you feel better; a shortened course may allow more resistant bacteria to survive.
- 3 Ask about alternative (non-antibiotic) ways to relieve your symptoms (e.g., saline nasal spray for congestion).
- 4 Know the bacterial infections that antibiotics help relieve (including bladder, staph and strep throat).
- 5 Discuss the potential side effects (e.g., diarrhea, nausea and stomach pain) and review former adverse or allergic reactions to medicines.
- 6 See your provider promptly if you have severe reactions to your antibiotic, including severe diarrhea, itching or blistering rashes, swelling of your face or throat, and breathing problems.

Things that spread antibiotic-resistant bacteria include:

- » Using or misusing antibiotics.
- » Not using infection prevention practices.
- » Living or working in unsanitary conditions.
- » Mishandling food.

Help protect yourself from bacterial infection:

- » Get vaccinated.
- » Keep your hands clean and away from your face, nose, eyes and mouth.
- » Avoid close contact with sick people.
- » Don't share antibiotics with others and never use leftover prescriptions.
- » Don't share personal items.



U.S. Antibiotic Awareness Week is November 18 to 24. Learn more at cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/.

Best-Ever Face Savers

During National Healthy Skin Month, review this skin care routine from the American Academy of Dermatology:



- » **Wash your face when you wake up and before you go to bed.** This reduces dirt and bacteria that settle on your face.

- » **Wash your face gently.** Scrubbing irritates your skin and can worsen acne, rosacea or other conditions. Apply a mild alcohol-free cleanser using a gentle circular motion with your fingertips. Rinse off the cleanser thoroughly, pat dry and apply a daily moisturizer.

- » **Use skin products designed for your skin type:** dry, oily, acne-prone, sensitive, normal or combination. Your dermatologist or health care provider can help identify your skin type.

- » **Apply sunscreen whenever you head outdoors.** Blocking sun rays slows down skin aging and helps prevent skin cancer. Use products labeled broad-spectrum with SPF 30.

- » **Don't tan.** It causes wrinkles and leathery-looking skin and raises your risk for melanoma cancer.

- » **Don't smoke.** It speeds skin aging significantly. Studies show smoking can also worsen some skin conditions, including psoriasis and eczema.

- » **Check for signs of cancer.** Routinely look for spots that differ from others, or that change, itch or bleed. See your provider if you spot something odd.



Life is full of beauty. Notice it. Notice the bumble bee, the small child, and the smiling faces. Smell the rain, and feel the wind. Live your life to the fullest potential, and fight for your dreams. — Ashley Smith



Quitting smoking for even 1 day is a step toward better health.



Sixteen million Americans live with smoking-related diseases, including emphysema and chronic bronchitis; and smoking causes 1 in 5 U.S. deaths. If you smoke and you want to stop (or you want to help a friend or relative quit), find support during the **Great American Smokeout** on Thursday, November 21.

» Learn more at cancer.org or call 1-800-227-2345.



The **Smart Moves Toolkit**, including this issue's printable download, **Are You Weight-Loss Ready?**, is at personalbest.com/extras/19V11tools.

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