

# Stay Healthy!

1. Wash your hands often to prevent the spread of germs.
2. Get the flu and pneumococcal vaccines.
3. Exercise regularly.
4. Eat healthy foods.
5. Get plenty of sleep at night.

## Frequently Asked Questions: Viruses & Antibiotics

### What are viruses?

Viruses are germs that can cause infections such as a cold, the flu, and bronchitis. A virus can travel through the air or on your hands and enter your hands when a sick person coughs or sneezes. Your body will try to fight and kill the virus. Getting the flu vaccine can help your body fight the flu. If your body can't kill the virus, then you will start to feel sick in 1-2 days.

### What are antibiotics?

Antibiotics are medications that treat infections caused by bacteria. Antibiotics do not kill viruses! Antibiotics do not cure or decrease cold and flu symptoms. Instead, overuse can lead to "antibiotic resistance."

### What is antibiotic resistance?

Antibiotic resistance happens when antibiotics lose their power to kill bacteria. This happens when we use antibiotics that are not needed or do not take them exactly as prescribed.

### Prevent antibiotic resistance now!

Take antibiotics ONLY when prescribed by your doctor. NEVER share antibiotics or take leftovers. Take ALL your antibiotics when prescribed, even if you start to feel better. Finish ALL your pills and do not save antibiotics.

### When will my doctor prescribe antibiotics?

Your doctor, nurse practitioner or physician assistant will evaluate your illness and may do extra lab tests to see if an antibiotic is necessary. If your doctor thinks that you have the flu, he/she may prescribe an antiviral.

## For More Information

Alliance Working for Antibiotic Resistance Education: [www.aware.md](http://www.aware.md)

Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: [www.cdc.gov/getsmart](http://www.cdc.gov/getsmart)

American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation: [www.choosingwisely.org](http://www.choosingwisely.org)

U.S. Department of Health & Human Services: [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov)

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# Feel Better Soon... Without Antibiotics!



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