



Antibiotics  
Antivirals  
Antifungals  
Antiparasitics



National Centre for  
Infectious Diseases



# MISUSE OF ANTIBIOTICS PUTS YOU AT RISK.

It can cause longer recovery time and ineffective future treatments, due to infections becoming antibiotic-resistant.



## DON'Ts

## DOs



Don't use them for the flu or common cold



Don't adjust dosage on your own



Do take antibiotics exactly as advised by your doctor



Do go for timely vaccinations



Don't keep them for future illnesses



Don't share them with others



Do practise good hygiene and adopt a healthy lifestyle



Do consume thoroughly cooked food and clean water

## What are antibiotics?

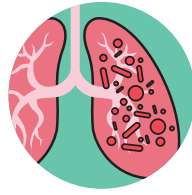
Antibiotics are **medicines used to treat bacterial infections such as:**



**Strep throat**



**Whooping cough**



**Tuberculosis**

They kill bacteria by attacking their cell walls or inhibiting their growth.

When your doctor prescribes antibiotics to treat your infection, the benefits outweigh the risks. However, as antibiotics destroy both good and bad bacteria, side effects like nausea or vomiting, diarrhoea, bloating and loss of appetite may occur.

Your doctor may then prescribe probiotic tablets along with your antibiotics to maintain and restore good bacteria.

## What are antibiotic resistance and antimicrobial resistance (AMR)?

Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria change over time and no longer respond to the antibiotics used to treat the infections they cause.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) occurs when bacteria, viruses, parasites, or fungi develop resistance and no longer respond to antimicrobials (such as antibiotics, antivirals, antiparasites or antifungals) designed to kill them.

When antibiotics or antimicrobials lose their effectiveness, it makes infections harder to treat and increases the risk of disease spread, severe illness and even death.

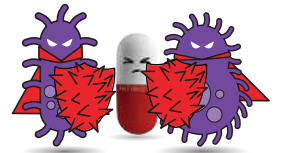
There is an increasing emergence and spread of AMR globally, caused by:

### 1. Overuse of antibiotics/antimicrobials

- Using them when not needed

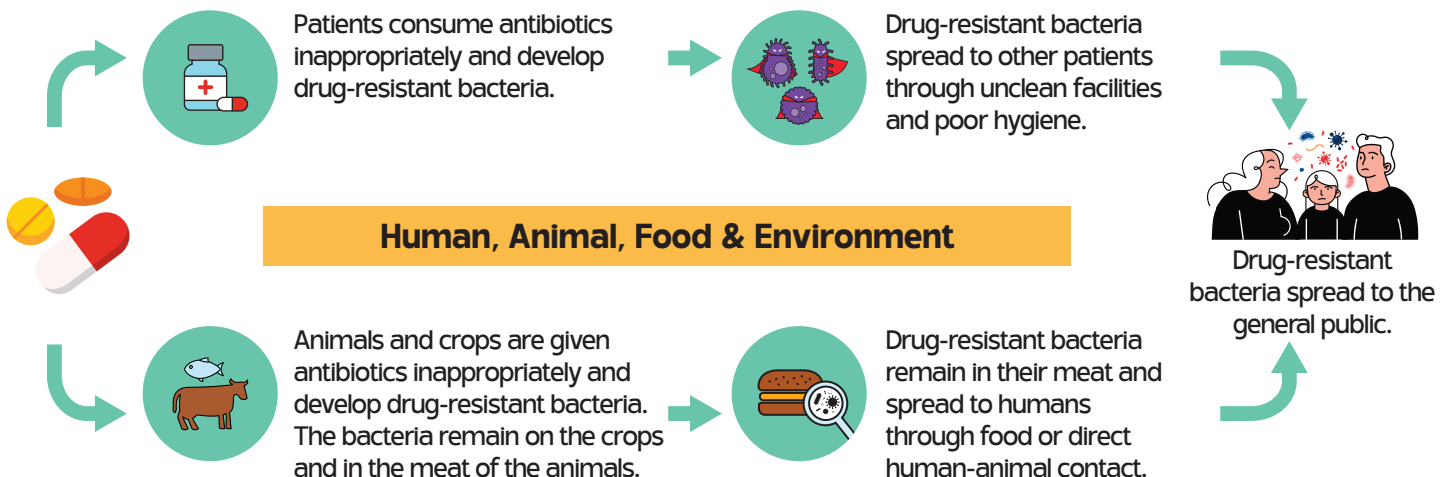
### 2. Misuse of antibiotics/antimicrobials

- Adjusting dosage on your own
- Keeping them for future illnesses
- Sharing them with others



## How does AMR spread?

Bacteria and microorganisms that are resistant to antibiotics and antimicrobials are also known as superbugs. This is how resistant bacteria or superbugs can spread:

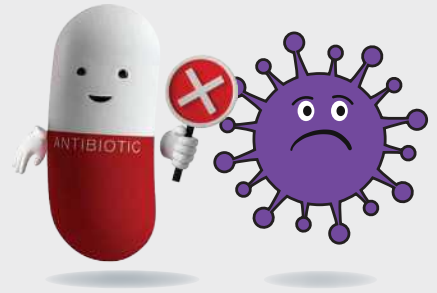


## Why can't I use them for flu (influenza)?

Antibiotics will **not help you recover faster from viral infections like the flu, common cold and COVID-19.**

Viruses have a different cell structure from bacteria and replicate in a different way, making antibiotics ineffective against viral infections.

Please do not pressure your doctor to prescribe antibiotics.



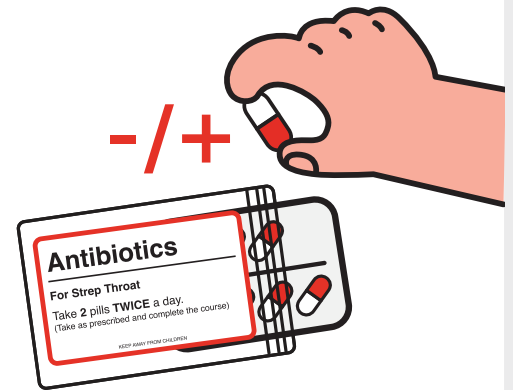
## Why can't I adjust the dosage on my own?

When prescribed, please take antibiotics exactly as per your doctor's advice.

**Adjusting your treatment makes antibiotics less effective.**

Even if you think that you have recovered, some of the bacteria that made you ill may still be in your body. This increases the risk of bacteria becoming resistant to the type of antibiotics you took.

Should you have any concerns about taking antibiotics, please discuss with your doctor.



## Why can't I keep them for future illnesses?

Antibiotics should only be used with your doctor's prescription. Bacterial and viral infections can bring about similar symptoms like fever, cough and nausea, making it hard for an untrained eye to distinguish between the two.

*If you have any leftover antibiotics, you can dispose them at restructured or private hospitals, and retail pharmacies with pharmacist counters like Guardian, Unity and Watsons.*



## Why can't I share them with others?

A doctor's consultation is needed to determine the type of infection one has, before he/she can take antibiotics. Sometimes, additional blood or urine tests, or X-rays may be needed to confirm a diagnosis.

If antibiotics are needed, the **doctor will then prescribe the type of antibiotics and the appropriate dosage to treat the infection.**



Follow your doctor's advice on the proper use of antibiotics.  
[go.gov.sg/use-antibiotics-right](https://go.gov.sg/use-antibiotics-right)