



# Keeping antibiotics effective, with your help



## When to use antibiotics

Antibiotics are for fighting serious infections caused by some bacteria. If your symptoms are caused by a virus, an antibiotic won't help.

Even when used correctly, antibiotics can have side effects such as skin rashes, diarrhoea, or thrush. Also, resistant bacteria may survive and later develop into an infection that will be hard, maybe even impossible, to treat.

## The global threat of antibiotic resistant bacteria

Each time antibiotics are used, there is a chance that some bacteria will survive and be resistant to future treatment - which is why you should use them according to medical advice and only when it is absolutely necessary.

If we overuse antibiotics, they might not work when you really need them and leave you vulnerable to new infections for a while.



## How can you help?

Listen to your health professional's advice if they say antibiotics won't work for you. When you are ill they will recommend the best possible treatments and explain why they will work for you. A recommendation may include prescribed antibiotics, but only if they are likely to be effective.

By following medical advice you can help keep antibiotics effective into the future. Our children will thank you for that.

## Our commitment to you

- Your health is very important to us - we promise to treat your illness in the best way possible
- We won't prescribe antibiotics when they are likely to do more harm than good

If you have any questions about the use of antibiotics, please ask your doctor, nurse, or pharmacist.



# 4 QUESTIONS FOR PATIENTS TO ASK



## DO I REALLY NEED THIS TEST OR PROCEDURE?

Tests may help you and your doctor or other healthcare professionals determine the problem. Procedures may help to treat it. Understanding why your doctor is considering a test — and weighing up the benefits and risks — is always advisable, and is every patient's right and responsibility.



## WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

If you have — or don't have — the test or procedure, what is likely to happen? Are there potential side effects? What are the chances of getting results that aren't accurate? Could that lead to more testing or another procedure?



## ARE THERE SIMPLER, SAFER OPTIONS?

Sometimes all you need to do is make lifestyle changes, such as eating healthier foods or exercising more. Or an alternative test or treatment that might deliver useful information, while reducing any potential negative impacts for you.



## WHAT HAPPENS IF I DON'T DO ANYTHING?

Ask if your condition might get worse — or better — if you don't have the test or procedure right away.