



Department
of Health

ANTIBIOTICS

HOW MUCH DO YOU KNOW? TRY OUR PATIENT QUIZ

1. The antibiotics my GP gave me have made me feel much better, but I still have some left to take...should I...

- A. Throw the rest away as I feel better already and don't need them.
- B. Take all of the course as prescribed.
- C. Save them in case I need antibiotics sometime in the future.

Your Answer

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2. If ever I get a cough, cold or sore throat, surely all I need is a dose of antibiotics to clear it up. This is...

- A. Correct. Antibiotics will usually sort any of these out.
- B. Partly correct, but antibiotics will not get rid of a cold.
- C. Wrong. Antibiotics don't work for colds, most coughs and sore throats.

Your Answer

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3. My GP wouldn't prescribe me antibiotics even though I know that's what I need. I think it's because they want to save money. This is...

- A. Correct. GPs need to find ways of reducing costs.
- B. Wrong. GPs will only prescribe antibiotics when they are needed.
- C. Partly correct. I've had antibiotics in the past and always used to get them from my GP, so why not now.

Your Answer

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4. My GP has only given me a short prescription of antibiotics but I think I need them for longer. Should I...

- A. Take the antibiotics as prescribed – or they may not clear the infection.
- B. Take one less a day than prescribed, to make them last longer.
- C. Use some of my friends antibiotics as they didn't use all the ones they were given last year.

Your Answer

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5. There are a lot of colds going around at the moment but I've been told taking antibiotics 'just in case' can drive up antibiotic resistance. This is...

- A. Correct. Taking antibiotics when you don't need to will allow bacteria to develop a resistance to the antibiotic.
- B. Wrong. Taking antibiotics will help build up your defences and stop you getting a cold in the first place.
- C. Wrong. Antibiotic resistance is only something elderly people get.

Your Answer

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PLEASE SEE OVERLEAF FOR THE ANSWERS – NO PEEKING!

THE ANSWERS

1. **The antibiotics my GP gave me have made me feel much better, but I still have some left to take...should I...**

B Take all of the course prescribed. When antibiotics are prescribed by a health professional it is important that you always take the whole prescription as directed. A lower dose or twice instead of three times daily may not be effective as it may not reach the infection in high enough concentrations. A lower dose also encourages bacteria to become antibiotic resistant.

2. **If ever I get a cough, cold or sore throat, surely all I need is a dose of antibiotics to clear it up. This is...**

C Wrong. Antibiotics don't work for colds, most coughs and sore throats. Antibiotics cannot help you recover from infections caused by viruses, such as common colds, and most coughs and sore throats, because antibiotics are only effective against bacterial infections. Mild infections with bacteria may also get better without antibiotics.

3. **My GP wouldn't prescribe me antibiotics even though I know that's what I need. I think it's because they want to save money. This is...**

B Wrong. GPs will only prescribe antibiotics when they are needed. GPs continue to be encouraged to only prescribe antibiotics when they are needed and not for self-limiting mild infections such as colds and most coughs, sinusitis, earache and sore throats.

4. **My GP has only given me a short prescription of antibiotics but I think I need them for longer. Should I...**

A Take the antibiotics as prescribed. When antibiotics are prescribed by a health professional it is important that you always take it as directed, a lower dose or twice instead of three times daily may not be effective and encourages resistance to develop. Don't share your antibiotics with anyone else – they are for you only and may not be effective for different infections in another individual.

5. **There are a lot of colds going around at the moment but I've been told taking antibiotics 'just in case' can drive up antibiotic resistance. This is...**

A Correct. Taking antibiotics when you don't need to will allow bacteria to develop a resistance to the antibiotic. Bacteria can adapt and find way to survive the effects of an antibiotic. They become 'antibiotic resistant' so that the antibiotic no longer works when you do need it. The more you use an antibiotic, the more bacteria become resistant to it.

Antibiotic resistance is a particular threat to children, older people and those with weakened immune systems, but it can affect everyone as most of us belong to vulnerable groups at some stage in our lives.