



## THE ANTIBIOTIC GUARDIAN QUIZ

**1. Antibiotics are not effective against coughs, colds, flu and most sore throats...**

- A. since these are mostly caused by viruses, which antibiotics do not work against
- B. but antibiotics sometimes work against viruses, so I should take them just in case
- C. is not true, antibiotics work against everything

**2. When I have a cough, cold or sore throat, I should...**

- A. book an appointment with my GP for all mild symptoms or illnesses
- B. seek immediate emergency medical attention
- C. check with a pharmacist about how to treat my symptoms

**3. There are lots of colds going around. I've been told taking antibiotics 'just in case' can drive up the number of drug-resistant infections**

- A. because taking antibiotics when you don't need to allows bacteria to develop a resistance to the antibiotic
- B. but only older people can get drug-resistant infections
- C. but taking antibiotics will help build up your defences and stop you getting a cold in the first place

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

- A. use some of my friend's antibiotics as they did not use all the ones they were given last year
- B. take one less a day than prescribed, to make them last longer
- C. take the antibiotics exactly as prescribed or they may not clear the infection

**5. Drug-resistant infections, also known as antibiotic resistant infections, are serious because...**

- A. antibiotics may not work against resistant bacteria
- B. without effective antibiotics many routine treatments or operations like chemotherapy, surgery and caesarean sections will become increasingly dangerous or impossible
- C. overuse of antibiotics means that antibiotic resistance will spread faster
- D. drug-resistant infections affect both humans and animals
- E. all of the above

**6. Drug-resistant bacteria can ....**

- A. spread from person to person
- B. be carried by a healthy person
- C. both of the above

## Drug-resistant infections: the facts.

- 1. Antibiotics are not effective against coughs, colds, flu and most sore throats... since these are mostly caused by viruses, which antibiotics do not work against.** 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. Remember to wash your hands and, if eligible, ensure you get your annual flu vaccination. These are the best way to prevent the spread of respiratory infections.
- 2. When I have a cough, cold or sore throat, I should... check with a pharmacist first about how to treat my symptoms.** A pharmacist is an expert on medicines and can help you treat your symptoms and pain with over-the-counter treatments. However, if you have severe symptoms and warning signs such as difficulty breathing or sharp chest pain for serious illness you should seek immediate medical attention; you can learn more at [treatyourselfbetter.co.uk](https://treatyourselfbetter.co.uk).
- 3. There are lots of colds going around. I've been told taking antibiotics 'just in case' can drive up the number of drug-resistant infections, but... taking antibiotics when you don't need to will allow bacteria to develop a resistance to the antibiotic.** Bacteria adapt and find ways to survive the effects of antibiotics. These drug-resistant bacteria may also be called 'antibiotic resistant', meaning antibiotics no longer work to kill these germs. The more you use an antibiotic, the more the bacteria become resistant to it.

When you take antibiotics, it can also kill the good bacteria which lives in and protects your body, making you more susceptible to infection from other harmful and potentially drug-resistant bacteria. Like most medicines, taking antibiotics can also have side effects such as diarrhoea, feeling sick or vomiting. Drug-resistant infections are difficult to treat and can affect anyone, but they are a particular threat to older people and those with weakened immune systems.

- 4. My GP has only given me a short prescription of antibiotics but I think I need them for longer. I should... take the antibiotics as prescribed or they may not clear the infection.** When antibiotics are prescribed by a health professional it is important that you always take them as directed. Antibiotics are given at a specific dose over a period of time to best clear an infection. Changing the dose may reduce the effectiveness of the antibiotics while prolonging the antibiotic course is unlikely to reduce the number of days you feel sick. Instead, both will enable bacteria to develop drug resistance. Never share your antibiotics with anyone else – they are only for you and may not be effective for different infections in another person. Any unused or surplus antibiotics should be returned to community pharmacy for safe destruction.

**5. Drug-resistant infections, also known as antibiotic resistant infections are serious because...**

- antibiotics may not work against resistant bacteria
- without effective antibiotics many routine treatments or operations like chemotherapy, surgery and caesarean sections will become increasingly dangerous or impossible
- overuse of antibiotics means that antibiotic resistance will spread faster and faster
- drug-resistant infections affect both humans and animals

**All of the above:** the spread of drug-resistant infections is one of the biggest threats facing us today; routine treatments and operations rely on antibiotics to work! We all need to act now to stop the spread of antibiotic resistance, or else we may not have them for much longer.

**6. Drug-resistant bacteria can be carried by a healthy person and spread from person to person**

Research convincingly shows that resistant bacteria such as MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) can spread from person to person within households. Spread (transmission) of resistant bacteria has also been demonstrated in hospital settings. Antibiotic resistant bacteria can live inside our bodies and on our skin without causing infection or symptoms. This is described as asymptomatic (without symptoms) carriage. Antibiotic treatment of asymptomatic bacteria, such as those found in urine, is not routinely recommended in non-pregnant people and may even cause harm by causing side effects and promoting the development of resistant bacteria that could cause infection at a future date.

**Find out how you can play your part to stop the spread of antibiotic resistance, choose a pledge at [AntibioticGuardian.com](https://antibioticguardian.com).  
Your actions can help protect antibiotics.**



**Choose Your Pledge**