

WHAT YOUR PHARMACIST WANTS YOU TO KNOW ABOUT . . .

USING ANTIBIOTICS WISELY

Resistance to harmful strains of bacteria is becoming a common problem, especially for patients who frequently take antibiotics. To ensure maximum effectiveness and safety from your antibiotics you should:

- Only take antibiotics to treat bacterial infections, not viral infections. If you are having cold symptoms, do not automatically assume that you need an antibiotic. Your doctor can conduct a culture or a blood test to determine the need for an antibiotic.
- Find out if the prescribed antibiotic should not be taken with other medications or with particular foods.
- If you are allergic to a specific antibiotic, be sure to inform your health care provider.
- Take the prescribed dose for the entire duration of time that it's prescribed. Don't skip doses or stop midstream, even if you feel better. Failure to complete your entire prescription can allow more stubborn bacteria to thrive and reproduce, which can lead to resistance problems.
- Never self-medicate with antibiotics that have not been prescribed for you or with leftover antibiotics that were prescribed for an earlier bacterial infection.
- Try not to spread infections by going to work ill or sending a sick child to school or day care.
- Ask that antibiotics be prescribed for as short a time as possible, but remember to never cut short the time of treatment prescribed by your doctor.
- If you (or a family member) are going to be admitted to the hospital for an operation, talk to your doctor or health-system pharmacist about procedures that can help reduce the risk of infection by resistant strains of bacteria.



Pharmacists are an important part of your health care team. For more information about what your pharmacist wants you to know, visit www.SafeMedication.com.