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Increasing Patient Education on Proper Antibiotic Stewardship

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How can I tell if I have a Bacterial or a Viral Illness?

Antibiotics Don't Treat Viruses.

Common Respiratory Infections	Virus or Bacteria?	Are Antibiotics Needed?
Common cold/runny nose	Virus	No
Sore throat (except strep)	Virus	No
COVID-19	Virus	No
Flu	Virus	No
Bronchitis/chest cold (in otherwise healthy children and adults)	Either	Maybe
Middle ear infection	Either	Maybe
Sinus infection	Either	Maybe
Strep throat	Bacteria	Yes
Whooping cough	Bacteria	Yes

When an antibiotic is not prescribed, ask your healthcare provider for tips on how you can feel better.

Why can't I use antibiotics to treat viruses?

Improper use of antibiotics can lead to **worse sickness** that is **more difficult to treat**.

This can affect not only you, but also **those close to you**.

Do antibiotics have side effects?

Yes. Side effects include:

- *Rashes*
- *Dizziness*
- *Nausea*
- *Diarrhea*
- *Yeast infection*

Severe diarrhea could be a sign of a life-threatening infection called **C. difficile**.

If you experience these side effects, follow up with your healthcare provider.