

# Antibiotics: Too Much Of A Good Thing?

As a Family Medicine physician I treat patients of all ages and I see many types of illnesses. One of the most common misperceptions I encounter with my patients is decisions on when to prescribe an antibiotic. Antibiotics can be an effective means of treatment for many **bacteria**-based illnesses; however they are not effective against **viruses** such as colds, flu, runny nose, and many sore throats, sinus and ear infections.

Unfortunately, many viruses simply must run their course and a treatment of antibiotics does not speed up your recovery, nor eliminate the virus. And it also may be more harmful if you take an antibiotic when it's not warranted - over time bacteria may become resistant to the effects of antibiotic treatment and more of a challenge to eliminate when you really need it.

Don't be disappointed if you walk away empty handed after a visit to your healthcare provider:

- Antibiotics are not effective for treating viruses
- Over-use of antibiotics may deter their effectiveness when you really need them
- Some antibiotics cause unpleasant side effects, which are unnecessary if the antibiotic isn't warranted

- New antibiotics may be on the horizon that are more effective on bacteria, but new drugs often take years to go from the development phase to being available on the market.

Always check with your healthcare provider if you, or your loved one, have any doubts about an illness, but also don't be alarmed if you're advised you may have a virus and you need to let it *run its course*.



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*medicine department and pediatric urgent care. Dr. Gray completed her Family Medicine Residency at Georgetown/Providence Hospital in Washington, DC. She received her medical degree from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine in Philadelphia, and her bachelor's degree in Psychology from Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey. Dr. Gray is available for new patients, please call 520-366-0300 for an appointment. Some same-day appointments may be available.*



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