

# 6 FACTS

## you should know about using antibiotics for bronchitis

- 1** Make sure you need antibiotics. Antibiotics are rarely needed for bronchitis. More than 90 percent of bronchitis infections are viral, meaning that antibiotics don't work on these types of infections.
- 2** Taking antibiotics for viral infections:
  - Will **not** cure the infection.
  - Will **not** keep other people from getting sick.
  - Will **not** help you feel better.
  - May cause unnecessary and harmful side effects such as diarrhea, nausea, vaginal infections and allergic reactions.
  - Adds unnecessary costs.
- 3** The more you take antibiotics that you don't need, the less effective these drugs become (called "antibiotic resistance"). Antibiotic resistance is when bacteria mutate and are able to resist the effects of an antibiotic.
- 4** Talk to your doctor to ensure you only take antibiotics for the right reason at the right time. Remember antibiotics are only effective for bacterial infections. A chest cold is almost always a viral infection.
- 5** Consider these options before taking antibiotics:
  - Let your body rest!
  - Drink warm liquids, such as water or tea, to loosen mucus (avoid milk products which may thicken mucus).
- 6** To help prevent bronchitis:
  - Avoid smoking and avoid exposure to secondhand smoke.
  - Wear a mask to avoid inhaling lung irritants, such as fumes, vapors and dust.
  - Wash your hands frequently.
  - Make sure you and your children are up-to-date with recommended immunizations and vaccines. Influenza virus can cause bronchitis.
  - Avoid close contact with people who have coughs and colds.
  - Run an air purifier or humidifier in your home.

**Contact your doctor if your symptoms persist or worsen.**

This health alert is brought to you by:



Source: [ChoosingWisely.org](http://ChoosingWisely.org); American Academy of Family Physicians, Centers for Disease Control

These items are provided solely for informational purposes and are not intended as a substitute for consultation with a medical professional. Patients with any specific questions about the items on this list or their individual health should consult their physician.

