Do I really need antibiotics?

**SAY YES TO ANTIBIOTICS**
when needed for certain infections caused by **bacteria**.

**SAY NO TO ANTIBIOTICS**
for **viruses**, such as colds and flu, or runny noses, even if the mucus is thick, yellow or green. Antibiotics also won’t help for some common bacterial infections including most cases of bronchitis, many sinus infections, and some ear infections.

Do antibiotics have side effects?

Anytime antibiotics are used, they can cause side effects. When antibiotics aren’t needed, they won’t help you, and the side effects could still hurt you. Common side effects of antibiotics can include:

- **Rash**
- **Dizziness**
- **Nausea**
- **Yeast Infections**
- **Diarrhea**

More serious side effects include **Clostridioides difficile** infection (also called **C. difficile** or **C. diff**), which causes diarrhea that can lead to severe colon damage and death. People can also have severe and life-threatening allergic reactions.

**Antibiotics save lives. When a patient needs antibiotics, the benefits outweigh the risks of side effects.**

1 out of 5 medication-related visits to the ED are from reactions to antibiotics.
What are antibiotic-resistant bacteria?

Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria no longer respond to the drugs designed to kill them. Anytime antibiotics are used, they can cause antibiotic resistance.

Bacteria, not the body, become resistant to the antibiotics designed to kill them.

When bacteria become resistant, antibiotics cannot fight them, and the bacteria multiply.

Some resistant bacteria can be harder to treat and can spread to other people.

More than 2.8 million antibiotic resistant infections occur in the United States each year, and more than 35,000 people die as a result.

Can I feel better without antibiotics?

Respiratory viruses usually go away in a week or two without treatment. To stay healthy and keep others healthy, you can:

Clean Hands
Cover Coughs
Stay Home When Sick
Get Recommended Vaccines

To learn more about antibiotic prescribing and use, visit www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use.