



(narrator)

Antibiotics Aren't Always the Answer.

You have a cold, or it could be the flu – whatever it is, you just want to feel better.

You head to the doctor to get antibiotics so you can get back to normal life.

Not so fast!

Antibiotics save lives, but many times they are prescribed when they aren't really needed, and that's a problem.

When you're given antibiotics when they aren't needed, they won't help you, and the side effects could still hurt you.

Those side effects can include a rash, dizziness, nausea, diarrhea, yeast infections, and an infection called *Clostridium difficile* (also called *C. difficile* or *C. diff*).

Some antibiotics, called fluoroquinolones, have special warnings about severe side effects.

These powerful antibiotics are often prescribed even when they aren't the recommended treatment.

Not only can antibiotics cause side effects, they also can lead to antibiotic resistance.

Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria no longer respond to the drugs designed to kill them.

This can make future infections harder to treat.

At least 2 million Americans get infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria each year.

Antibiotics do not work on viruses such as those that cause colds and the flu, or runny noses.

Antibiotics are only needed for treating certain infections caused by bacteria.

Antibiotics also won't help some common bacterial infections, including most cases of bronchitis, many sinus infections, and some ear infections.

When you have an infection caused by bacteria and your doctor prescribes antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed.



Talk with your healthcare professional if you have any questions about your antibiotics.

Stay healthy and keep others healthy by cleaning hands, covering coughs, staying home when sick, and getting recommended vaccines, for flu, for example.

Improving the way we take antibiotics will help keep us all healthy and will help fight antibiotic resistance so these critical drugs are available for years to come.

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