

# Use Of Antibiotics

Since the 1940s, antibiotics have been the cornerstone of infectious disease therapy. Their remarkable healing power invites widespread and often inappropriate use, which leads to antibiotic resistance among bacteria and consequent treatment complications. Antibiotics are prescribed for infections caused by bacteria. Antibiotics should not be used for infections caused by viruses such as the common cold and flu.

## Here are some actions you can take to limit the development of antibiotic resistance:

- Do not demand antibiotics from your physician.
- When given antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed and complete the full course of treatment.
- Do not hoard pills for later use or share leftover antibiotics.
- Wash your hands properly to reduce the chance of getting sick and spreading infection.
- Wash fruits and vegetables thoroughly; avoid raw eggs and undercooked meat, especially in ground form. (The majority of food items



which cause diseases are raw or undercooked foods of animal origin such as meat, milk, eggs, cheese, fish or shellfish.)

- When protecting a sick person whose defenses are weakened, soaps and other products with antibacterial chemicals are helpful.

### **Antibiotic resistance:**

- Sometimes bacteria find a way to fight the antibiotic you are taking and your infection won't go away. When antibiotic resistance develops, your doctor must prescribe a different antibiotic in order to fight the infection.
- Eventually, however, bacteria resistant to the first antibiotic picked up resistance to others as they were introduced into the environment. It's like a snowball rolling downhill, becoming bigger and stronger and not losing what it had acquired before.

### **Factors that contribute to antibiotic resistance:**

- Misuse and overuse of antibiotics in humans, animals and agriculture
- Demand for antibiotics when antibiotics are not appropriate
- Failure to finish an antibiotic prescription
- Using antibiotics without a prescription

