

# VitaMin



Vital health information in a minute

## Get smart about antibiotics

Using antibiotics wisely can help you and your family stay healthy. But how much do you really know about antibiotics and what they treat? Take our quiz and find out.

1. Green-colored mucus is a sure sign that an antibiotic is needed. **True or False?**
2. Antibiotic resistance is a serious health threat. **True or False?**
3. You should stop taking antibiotics as soon as you feel better. **True or False?**
4. Antibiotics might not cure a virus, but they can help you feel better faster. **True or False?**

### Quiz answers

1. **False.** Coughing up green-colored mucus can be miserable, but it doesn't mean you need antibiotics. Green-colored mucus could indicate a virus, which isn't treated by antibiotics. Remember, antibiotics are only useful in treating bacterial infections.<sup>1</sup>
2. **True.** Misusing antibiotics helps create bacteria that can make you sick and are resistant to medication. In the United States, at least 2 million people are infected with bacteria that are resistant to antibiotics each year.<sup>2</sup>
3. **False.** If you're prescribed an antibiotic, be sure to finish the full course. Don't stop taking your medicine when you feel better. A shortened course of antibiotics often kills only the most vulnerable bacteria, allowing stronger bacteria to survive.
4. **False.** Talk to your doctor or pharmacist about ways to manage symptoms. Help your body's immune system do its job by getting adequate rest and drinking plenty of fluids.

Illness	Usual cause	Antibiotic needed?
Common cold	Virus	No
Flu	Virus	No
Bronchitis/cough	Virus	No
Whooping cough	Bacteria	Yes
Sore throat	Virus	No
Strep throat	Bacteria	Yes
Fluid in the middle ear	Virus	No
Urinary tract infection	Bacteria	Yes

### Sources:

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Antibiotics Aren't Always the Answer." <http://www.cdc.gov/features/getsmart> (last reviewed/updated November 16, 2015)
2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Antibiotic Resistance Threats in the United States, 2013. <http://www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/threat-report-2013/index.html> (last reviewed July 14, 2014)

This is intended to be general health information and not medical advice or services. You should consult your doctor for medical advice or services, including seeking advice before undertaking a new diet or exercise program.

Together, all the way.®



All Cigna products and services are provided exclusively by or through operating subsidiaries of Cigna Corporation, including Cigna Health and Life Insurance Company, Connecticut General Life Insurance Company, Cigna Behavioral Health, Inc., Cigna Health Management, Inc., and HMO or service company subsidiaries of Cigna Health Corporation. The Cigna name, logo, and other Cigna marks are owned by Cigna Intellectual Property, Inc. All pictures are used for illustrative purposes only.