

FOR A RESPONSIBLE USE OF ANTIBIOTICS

Antibiotics are important medicines used to treat bacterial infections. There are different families of antibiotics, each designed for certain types of bacteria. Today, more than 90% are produced in Asia,¹ which causes pollution at production sites, increases CO₂ emissions from transport, and increases the risk of shortages. Once released into the environment, antibiotics remain active and can harm ecosystems — especially by polluting water and threatening biodiversity.²

Destruction of the Gut Flora

Antibiotics destroy the bacteria responsible for the infection, but they also impact the gut flora (microbiome).

When they are not necessary

Ear infections (often viral) and non-severe **urinary tract infections** (in adults) can be treated with anti-inflammatory medication for 48 hours before considering antibiotics if symptoms persist.^{3, 4}

Viral infections

Antibiotics are not prescribed for viral infections such as colds or sore throats. Instead, pain relief, natural remedies, and regular nasal rinsing with saline are recommended.

Antibiotic resistance

Overuse or inappropriate use of antibiotics can make bacteria resistant. This increases the risk of severe or untreatable infections.

Side effects

Antibiotics can have frequent and potentially serious side effects, such as diarrhea or allergic reactions.

When they are essential

Severe infections, such as **pneumonia**, **upper urinary tract infections**, **skin infections**, or **blood infections**, must be treated with antibiotics.⁵

LESS ANTIBIOTICS

Health Benefits

- Preservation of the natural microbial flora
- Reduction of side effects
- Decrease in antibiotic resistance

Environmental Benefits

- Reduction of environmental pharmaceutical pollution
- Less packaging waste
- Lower greenhouse gas emissions from production, transport, and distribution

THE SUSTAINABLE PRESCRIPTION

♦ **Ask your doctor why** antibiotics are being prescribed and question the necessity if the reason is unclear.
♦ **Do not self-medicate** with antibiotics.
♦ **Take antibiotics** exactly as prescribed.
♦ **Return unused antibiotics** to the pharmacy to avoid polluting the environment.

When to Discuss Antibiotic Prescription?

Especially during a consultation for fever or an infection. When prescribing antibiotics, it is useful to explain their potential side effects.

REFERENCES

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