

# 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,<sup>1</sup> which causes pollution at production sites, increases CO<sub>2</sub> 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.<sup>2</sup>

## 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.<sup>3, 4</sup>

## 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.<sup>5</sup>

## 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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