

Important information

NEVER share antibiotics with anyone other than the person they were prescribed for.

NEVER keep left over antibiotics for another time.

NEVER flush antibiotics down toilets or sinks - unused medication should be disposed of at a local pharmacy.

ALWAYS tell your doctor, nurse or pharmacist if you have had an allergic reaction to an antibiotic, and remind them of your allergy before you receive any antibiotics.

ALWAYS read the medication information leaflet before taking an antibiotic.

ALWAYS store your antibiotics in their original container, and make yourself aware of any specific storage instructions (e.g. store in a fridge, keep out of direct sunlight etc.)

Advice About Antibiotics

Information for patients and carers

Useful Contact Numbers

Hull Royal Infirmary Pharmacy – (01482) 674412

Castle Hill Hospital Pharmacy - (01482) 623278

NHS 111 - 111



This leaflet was produced by the Antimicrobial Team, Department of Pharmacy, Clinical Support Services, Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust.

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Introduction

Antibiotics are prescribed either to treat infections caused by bacteria or, occasionally, to prevent bacterial infections. Different types of antibiotics are used to treat different types of infections. You should only be prescribed antibiotics when you need them. The dose and duration of your treatment will depend on the type of infection, how severe it is and the antibiotic used.

Antibiotics work by either killing the bacteria, or stopping them from increasing in number. They don't work against infections caused by viruses, such as common colds, influenza, most coughs and gastroenteritis. When prescribed and taken correctly, antibiotics will help to treat and shorten the duration of bacterial infections.

Misuse of antibiotics causes bacteria to become resistant to antibiotic treatments meaning that, if you need antibiotics in the future, they may not work.

How and when to take antibiotics

Antibiotics are given for a specific period of time and you will need to take them at regular intervals during the day.

Always take them as directed by your doctor and complete the course. Do not stop taking them early even if symptoms improve as the infection may still be in the body even when you are feeling better.

Some antibiotics may interact with other medications (including herbal medications), food, drinks and alcohol. Refer to the leaflet with your medication, or ask your pharmacist or doctor for advice.

Common side effects

Side effects are mostly mild and temporary unwanted effects of treatment. The most common side effects from antibiotics include:

- Diarrhoea
- Nausea or vomiting
- Upset stomach
- Fungal infection such as thrush

A full list of known side effects is provided in the medication leaflet. If you have any concerns about side effects, please consult with a pharmacist or doctor.

Allergic reactions

Most antibiotic reactions are side effects, rather than true allergies. Unlike allergies, side effects do not prevent you from having the antibiotic again. However, you may be having an allergic reaction if you do experience a more serious side effect, such as:

- Rash and itching
- Swelling of the face and tongue
- Difficulty breathing

If these occur, stop taking the medication immediately and contact your doctor or NHS 111. If these symptoms rapidly progress and become worse, this is called an anaphylactic reaction and you should call 999 immediately.