

VIRAL

BACTERIAL

Infections

Why You Don't Need an Antibiotic

Many people think if they have a cold or a fever or an infection, antibiotics can cure whatever ails them. But that's not always true! You've made the right choice by seeing your doctor for an examination, so that he or she can help you get better. Sure antibiotics are powerful medicines that cure some illnesses, but not all. It depends on what's making you sick. Your doctor suspects that you have an infection caused by a virus and that's why you won't be taking an antibiotic.

Can a Viral Infection be Cured?

Generally, there's nothing you can do to really help cure the infection. Most viral infections, like the ones that cause colds, just have to die out on their own without help from you or from medicines. It may take a few days and you might have to stay in bed, drink plenty of fluids and rest. You may not feel like doing much else!

If you don't feel better after a few days, call your doctor. A simple earache may turn out to be an ear infection, or a cough may turn out to be something more, in which case there are probably medicines your doctor knows about to help you. You may not get well any sooner, but you may feel better in the meantime.

Antibiotics Are Not Necessary

When people take an antibiotic for a viral infection, they may be wasting their money! Furthermore, when people take antibiotics when they're not necessary, their chances of being infected with antibiotic-resistant bacteria increases. Resistant bacteria have, over the years, "learned" to fight back against antibiotics. Some antibiotics can no longer kill the bacteria they once did.

So It's Okay If I Don't Get a Prescription?

Sure. Why take medicine when you may not need it? If you have a viral infection, antibiotics will not cure it. If you have a simple viral infection, your own body can often fight it off. This means you don't have to spend your money on a prescription – and you can save antibiotic use for when you really need it, for a more serious infection.

Notes

Common Bacterial Infections

A middle ear infection is called **otitis media**. You or your child can develop an ear infection after having a cold, nose or throat infection, or from an allergy. Fluids build up in the middle ear. This fluid may become infected by bacteria or a virus, causing swelling of the eardrum and ear pain.

Your child may have:

- Pain
- Loss of appetite
- Trouble sleeping/lying down
- Fever (100°F to 104°F/37.78°C to 40°C)
- Ear drainage
- Difficulty hearing

With antibiotics, the pain and fever should go away in two or three days. If not, call your doctor.

Bronchitis is an infection of the lungs and windpipe. In bronchitis, the windpipe is usually swollen and filled with fluid. You may have:

- A sore throat
- A cough that produces a mucous-like discharge
- Difficulty breathing (in some cases)
- Chest tightness
- Shortness of breath

Sinusitis, often caused by bacteria or an allergy, is an infection of one or more of your sinuses. When infected, the lining of the sinus becomes swollen, causing a buildup of fluid. This buildup causes:

- Congestion
- Runny nose
- Headache
- Sinus pressure

If your doctor thinks that your sinusitis has been caused by bacteria, he or she will usually prescribe an antibiotic.

Why Your Doctor Chose Clavulin

Your doctor has prescribed an antibiotic called Clavulin. As with all medicines, it's important to follow your doctor's instructions carefully to get the best results.

How to Take Clavulin

- Follow your doctor's instructions! Take the right amount of medicine at the right time and finish the full prescription. Some people save a few antibiotic tablets in case one day they don't feel well. This isn't the way antibiotics work! You can't just take a few and knock out your infection.
- When you miss a dose of Clavulin, the amount of antibiotic in your body can fall too low to fight the infection. Taking Clavulin as instructed – usually twice a day – helps make sure that you have enough medicine in your body all day.
- Take Clavulin at the beginning of a meal or a snack. For some people, it's easier to take a dose with breakfast or dinner or an evening snack.
- Don't miss a dose. You'd be surprised how many people don't take their medicine the right way! For an antibiotic to work properly, you need to take every dose as your doctor instructed.
- If you miss a dose, don't take two doses the next time. Get back on your normal schedule as soon as possible.
- You may start to feel better in a few days. But this does not mean the infection has gone away. Finish your entire prescription so you get the most benefit from Clavulin.