

# YOUR FAMILY & ANTIBIOTICS

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Antibiotics aren't always the best treatment for some common infections. In fact, they can't fix a virus like a cold or flu, and are not usually needed to treat most ear infections.

**We need to use antibiotics carefully, or they'll stop working.**

Overusing antibiotics, especially when we don't need to, is causing **antibiotic resistance** – when bacteria get better at defending themselves, and our antibiotics don't work as well.

Over time, antibiotics could stop working when we need them to, putting people's lives at risk. It's a global health threat, and we all need to help keep antibiotics working.



## Colds & Flu

**Most cold and flu symptoms clear by themselves in 7 to 10 days.**

It's a good idea to stay home from work or school when you are feeling most unwell, are sneezing or coughing often, or you have a very runny nose.



**The 5 best ways to treat a cold or flu:**



### Rest

Rest is best to help your immune system fight the virus. Stay home if you need to.



### Fluids

Drink plenty of fluids (water is best) to keep your body well hydrated.



### Pain relief

Take regular paracetamol or ibuprofen to relieve any aches and pains or reduce a fever.



### Decongestants

A decongestant tablet or nasal spray may help relieve a runny or blocked nose.



### Lozenges & gargles

Sucking on a throat lozenge or gargling several times a day with warm salt water (1/2 tsp of salt in 1 cup water) can soothe a sore throat. Gargle for about 30 seconds and spit out.

## Earache

Ear infections are very common in young children, especially during or just after a cold. Antibiotics won't help most ear infections get better any faster in children over 2 years old. That's why most earaches need pain relief, not antibiotics. Rest, cuddles, time at home, and pain relief medicines (like paracetamol and ibuprofen) will help relieve a fever, any pain or discomfort, and help your child feel better.

Your doctor might want to recheck your child's ears around 6-12 weeks later to make sure any fluid in the ears has gone.



## Stop colds & flu spreading

- Catch coughs and sneezes in the crook of your arm, or with a tissue. Throw the tissue into the bin, and wash your hands afterwards.
- Wash your hands often, with soap, for 20 seconds, and dry them well afterwards.
- Clean kitchen and bathroom surfaces regularly.
- Stay home and away from others when you're most sick.

**For more information:**

[www.keepantibioticsworking.nz](http://www.keepantibioticsworking.nz)

[www.healthline.govt.nz](http://www.healthline.govt.nz)

You can call Healthline free 24 hours a day: **0800 611 116**

In an emergency visit your local hospital or call 111.



Always take your doctor, nurse or pharmacist's advice on using antibiotics.

New Zealand Government

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