

## **ANTIBIOTICS FACT SHEET**

### **WHAT DO ANTIBIOTICS DO?**

Antibiotics are powerful medicines that help cure certain infections like strep throat, some ear and sinus infections, and other infections caused by bacteria. They will not cure – or even help – other illnesses such as chest colds, bronchitis and the flu.

### **WHEN DO YOU NEED ANTIBIOTICS?**

Let your doctor decide. Some illnesses require antibiotics. Others – like colds and the flu – are not cured with antibiotics.

### **WHAT HAPPENS IF YOU TAKE ANTIBIOTICS WHEN YOU DO NOT NEED THEM?**

If you or your children take an antibiotic when it's not needed, the antibiotic loses its ability to fight infections. This means the next time you or your children really need the antibiotic, it might not work.

### **IF YOU DO NOT GET AN ANTIBIOTIC FOR YOUR ILLNESS:**

- Get extra sleep.
- Drink extra fluids.
- Try a non-prescription pain reliever.
- Try over-the-counter cold and cough medicine.

### **IF YOU DO GET AN ANTIBIOTIC FOR YOUR ILLNESS:**

- Take the medication EXACTLY as the doctor has instructed.
- ALWAYS take the full prescription.
- NEVER share prescription medicine with other family members or friends.

### **DON'T MAKE SOMEONE ELSE SICK! HERE'S HOW:**

- Wash your hands a lot.
- Keep your hands away from your nose and mouth.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you sneeze or cough.

**If you have questions, talk to your doctor.**

**For additional information, visit [www.health.state.nm.us](http://www.health.state.nm.us), or contact the New Mexico Department of Health Office of Epidemiology at (505) 827-0006.**

**Information is also available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at:  
[www.cdc.gov/getsmart](http://www.cdc.gov/getsmart)**