**MAJOR THREATS**

*Clostridium difficile (C. difficile)*

A bacterium that normally lives in your gastrointestinal tract and is controlled by the good bacteria in the gut. This infection commonly occurs after antibiotics have ruined the normal, ‘good’ bacteria in the gut and allowed the *Clostridium difficile* bacteria to multiply causing an infection. These bacteria are resistant to many antibiotics and generate spores that are tough to kill.

Common symptoms associated with *C. difficile* infections:
- Diarrhea
- Fever
- Stomach cramps
- Nausea
- Loss of appetite

It is often found in hospitals and group housing. It is frequently fatal in the elderly.

*Methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)*

A type of bacteria that commonly lives on the skin or in the nose.

MRSA triggers a wide-range of illnesses, from skin and wound infections to pneumonia and bloodstream infections that can lead to death.

An infection may occur when MRSA reaches a cut, scrape, or other break in the skin.

Common symptoms associated with MRSA infections:
- Pimples
- Rashes
- Pus-filled boils, especially when warm, painful, red, or swollen, can mean a staph or MRSA skin infection

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**YOU CAN HELP PREVENT ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE**

Tell your doctor you are concerned about antibiotic resistance.

Ask what you can take to feel better and get symptomatic relief without using antibiotics.

Sometimes the best treatment for your illness may be relieving your symptoms, not an antibiotic.

Never take an antibiotic for a viral infection such as the cold or flu.

Never pressure your doctor to prescribe an antibiotic.

Never take antibiotics prescribed for someone else or save them for the next time you are sick.

**Properly take your antibiotic**

Take the prescribed antibiotic exactly as your doctor or pharmacist tells you.

If taken improperly, antibiotics are more likely to cause harm.

Make sure to take your medication for the full duration even if you start feeling better.

Never skip doses.

Discard any leftover medication.

Talk to your pharmacist about safely discarding leftover medication.
**ANTIBIOTIC USE & ABUSE**

**Why use antibiotics?**
Antibiotics are used to fight bacterial infections by either killing the bacteria or making it difficult for the bacteria to grow and multiply.

**Antibiotics can only treat BACTERIAL infections, not infections caused by VIRUSES**

**What is antibiotic resistance?**
Bacteria are now fighting back and making antibiotics less effective.

This happens when the bacteria in your body change in a way that decreases or eliminates the capability of antibiotics to kill the bacteria; therefore, the antibiotic is unable to treat or prevent your infection leading to more complications and deaths.

Once resistant, bacteria can survive, multiply, and cause more harm to your body.

**Overuse of Antibiotics**
Taking multiple antibiotics for extended periods of time can lead to resistance and unwanted side effects including rash, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or even shortness of breath.

The more often a person takes antibiotics, the more likely they are to develop antibiotic resistant bacteria in their body.

Resistance often results when antibiotics are used inappropriately for viral infections.

Inappropriate or overuse of antibiotics will increase the risk of introducing antibiotic resistant bacteria to local communities and hospitals.

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**TIPS AND ADVICE FOR VIRAL INFECTIONS**

Antibiotics are not helpful against viruses, here are some things that may help you feel better and control your symptoms while you are sick:

- Get plenty of rest
- **Hydrate with plenty of fluids.** Drink eight 8-ounce glasses (64 oz.) of water daily.
- Use a humidifier or cool mist vaporizer to moisten room air.
- Breathe in steam from a bowl of warm water or shower.
- Use cough drops, ice chips, popsicles, or lozenges
- Gargle with warm salt water
- Use Tylenol or Advil if fever present. Avoid aspirin in children/teenagers. **Call doctor if fever continues after 3 days**

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**When to see the doctor**

- **Temperature over 100.4°F lasting > 24 hours in children < 2 years.** If ages 2 + more than 3 days.
- Trouble breathing, shortness of breath. Signs of dehydration.
- **Worsening symptoms after 2-3 days** or lasting > 10 days, or up to 3 weeks (for bronchitis).
- Severe symptoms with body aches, vomiting, swollen lymph nodes
- Discolored phlegm or bloody mucus

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**PREVENTION**

**How to protect yourself and others**

- Wash hands often with soap and water. After coughing or sneezing are important times.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Avoid touching the eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs on the hand can spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Avoid ERs and urgent care clinics if you don't need to go. These are places where you are more likely to be exposed to germs and illnesses.
- Stay home from school while you are contagious.
- **Stay up to date with yearly vaccines.** Ask your doctor or local pharmacist which vaccines are recommended for you and your family.
- Vaccines are an effective way to prevent infections that may require an antibiotic and keep diseases from spreading.

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**COMMON VIRAL INFECTIONS:**

- Common cold
- Flu
- Most coughs and bronchitis "chest cold"
- Most sore throats *(EXCEPT strep throat)*
- Runny nose
- Most sinus and ear infections