

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**What's Got You Sick?**

*If You Have a Cold or Flu, Antibiotics Won't Work for You*

**Eau Claire, WI, November 17, 2017** –Are you aware that colds, flu, most sore throats, and many sinus and ear infections are caused by viruses? Did you know that antibiotics do not help fight viruses? It's true. Antibiotics only fight bacteria. Most respiratory illnesses are viruses, so antibiotics are not helpful.

Taking antibiotics when you have a virus may do more harm than good. Antibiotics can have side effects. Rashes, yeast infections, and diarrhea are common side effects. The overuse and misuse of antibiotics also can lead to antibiotic resistance. Antibiotic resistance is what happens when bacteria no longer respond to drugs. Antibiotic resistance is a growing problem, both in the United States and across the world.

“Antibiotics do save lives. When a patient needs antibiotics, the benefits outweigh the risks,” explains Allison Gosbin, public health nurse at the Eau Claire City-County Health Department, “However, improving the way we take antibiotics helps keep us healthy now. It also ensures that life-saving antibiotics will be available for future generations.”

Talk with your healthcare provider if you have questions about whether your illness should be treated with antibiotics. You also can learn more about when antibiotics are and are not needed at <https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/community/for-patients>.



**Antibiotics do not cure:**

- Colds or flu
- Most coughs and bronchitis
- Most sore throats
- Runny noses

**Taking antibiotics for viral infections will not:**

- Cure the illness
- Keep others from catching the illness
- Help you feel better

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