



Antibiotics and Viral Infections

Viral infections are the most common types of infections and most common cause of fever in children.

What is the cause?

Viruses are spread by coming in contact with infected fluids or secretions. A common way to "catch" a virus is if you touch an infected person or item and then rub your eyes or nose. Viruses can also be inhaled from the air after someone coughs or sneezes.

What are the symptoms?

The symptoms caused by viruses depend on where they are in the body. Some cause a fever, sore throat, cough, runny nose, headache, or muscle aches. Others cause abdominal symptoms such as nausea, cramping, and diarrhea.

Why using antibiotics is not a good thing in viral infections. What are side/ adverse effects with antibiotics?

Antibiotics have no effect on viruses. No antibiotics can treat the common cold, sore throat viral viruses. Hence using antibiotics does not help at all. In fact unnecessary use of antibiotics can cause unnecessary side effects/ adverse effects.

Some antibiotics can cause diarrhea and may affect other drugs also being taken. Some antibiotics cause nausea. For any antibiotic, an allergic rash can develop in some patients. **Also, the more we take any particular antibiotic, the more resistant infections can become to that antibiotic over time. So that antibiotics may not work effectively when you will actually need it in the future.** These are all good reasons to not to use antibiotics in viral infections.

If your child has a viral infection, have your child:

- Get plenty of rest
- Drink lots of fluids
- Use Tylenol or Motrin for pain or fever.
- Let the infection runs its own course.

How can I help prevent a viral infection?

Make sure your child washes his hands frequently, especially after going to the bathroom. Avoid sharing eating utensils, towels, and handkerchiefs. Catch sneezes and coughs with disposable tissues and throw tissues away immediately. A healthy diet, plenty of exercise, and rest will help your child to fight off viral infections.

When your child has viral infection, your child should be checked at the office if you are worried about the way your child is acting.

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