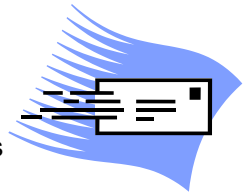




ManateeChoice Health Plan

Fast Facts



For more information, contact your Pharmacy Advocate, Dr. Chris Williams
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FAST FACTS is published by the Manatee Health Network (MHN) to provide Members with the opportunity to better understand medical conditions, various treatment options, and the impact of these options on member costs. **FAST FACTS** should be used in addition to the advice of your physicians, pharmacists, & other healthcare professionals.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Antibiotics

Antibiotics are effective against bacterial infections, certain fungal infections and some kinds of parasites. Antibiotics don't work against viruses. Knowing when antibiotic use is appropriate is important for assuring that these medications will work when they are truly necessary. Check out the following chart to see the differences in bacterial and viral infections.

When Antibiotics Are Effective

- **BACTERIAL INFECTIONS**
 - Some ear infections
 - Severe sinus infections
 - Strep throat
 - Urinary tract infections
 - Many wound and skin infections

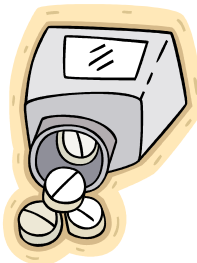
When Antibiotics Are Not Appropriate

- **VIRAL INFECTIONS**
 - Most ear infections
 - Colds
 - Most coughs
 - Most sore throats
 - Influenza (Flu)
 - Bronchitis

Did you Know?

Certain Antibiotics and Anti-Infectives are **free of charge** for MHN members at Sweetbay pharmacies.

- * Augmentin (Amoxicillin/Clavulanate)
- * Amoxicillin
- * Cephalexin
- * Doxycycline
- * Erythromycin
- * Penicillin VK
- * Bactrim (Sulfamethoxazole/Trimethoprim)



(up to a 14 day supply at average oral dosages)

How to Feel Better

If you do find yourself suffering from a cold or flu (viral infection), here are some tips to control the symptoms:

- ◆ Drink plenty of fluids
- ◆ Use a warm compress on sore areas
- ◆ Use a clean humidifier or cool mist vaporizer
- ◆ Soothe a sore throat with ice chips, sore throat spray, or lozenges
- ◆ Use a decongestant or saline nasal spray to help relieve nasal symptoms
- ◆ Breathe in steam from a bowl of hot water or shower
- ◆ Take acetaminophen, ibuprofen or naproxen to relieve pain or fever

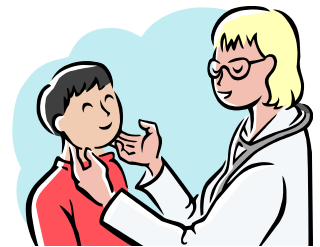
Responsible Antibiotic Use

If antibiotics are used too often for things they can't treat — like colds, flu or other viral infections — they become less effective against the bacteria they're intended to treat. Not taking antibiotics exactly as prescribed also leads to problems. For example, if you take an antibiotic for only a few days — instead of the full amount prescribed by your doctor — the antibiotic may wipe out some but not all of the bacteria. The surviving bacteria become more resistant and can be spread to other people. When bacteria become resistant to first line treatments, the risk of complications and death is increased. Thousands of Americans die each year due to preventable antibiotic-resistant infections.

What you can do to safeguard antibiotic effectiveness

Repeated and improper use of antibiotics is the primary cause of the increase in the number of drug-resistant bacteria. Here's what you can do to promote proper use of antibiotics:

- ◆ **Understand when antibiotics should be used.** Don't expect to take antibiotics every time you're sick. Antibiotics are effective in treating most bacterial infections, but they're not useful against viral infections, such as colds, acute bronchitis or the flu. And even some common bacterial ailments, such as mild ear infections, don't benefit much from antibiotics.
- ◆ **Don't pressure your doctor for antibiotics if you have a viral illness.** Instead, talk with your doctor about ways to relieve your symptoms — for instance, a saline nasal spray to clear a stuffy nose or a mixture of warm water, lemon and honey to temporarily soothe a sore throat.
- ◆ **Take antibiotics exactly as prescribed.** Follow your doctor's instructions when taking medication. Don't stop treatment a few days early because you're feeling better. Taking the full amount of antibiotics is the only way to kill all of the harmful bacteria. A shortened course of antibiotics, on the other hand, often wipes out only some bacteria while allowing resistant bacteria to survive.
- ◆ **Never take antibiotics without a prescription.** If you didn't complete a full course of antibiotics, you might be tempted to use the leftover medication the next time you get sick or to pass it along to someone else. This is not a good idea. For one thing, the antibiotic might not be appropriate for the illness and/or the patient. And even if it is, you're not likely to have enough pills to combat the germs making you sick, which can lead to more resistant bacteria.
- ◆ **Prevent the spread of germs.** Good hygiene goes a long way in preventing infection. Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water, especially after using the toilet, changing a diaper, or handling raw meat or poultry. Keep food preparation areas clean. Although antibacterial cleaners and soaps are useful and widely available, plain soap and hot water work fine to kill germs in most settings.



Only a physician can decide if antibiotics are right for you. Talk to your doctor or pharmacist if you have questions or concerns about a prescribed medication.

Manatee Health Disclaimer

The information in this newsletter is not a substitute for medical advice. It is for reference only and should not be used to determine treatment for your specific medical conditions—only a health care provider can do this. You should seek prompt medical care for any specific health issues and consult your physician regarding the use of over-the-counter products to treat any medical condition or consult your physician regarding the use of prescription or over-the-counter products to treat any medical condition or before starting any new diet, fitness, or supplement regimen.

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