

# Do you really need antibiotics?

## *Do antibiotics help?*

If your symptoms such as a cough or sore throat are caused by a virus then antibiotics won't help you get better

Most coughs and colds are caused by a virus which means antibiotics don't help

## *Taking antibiotics can be harmful*

Antibiotics can cause side effects like skin rashes, diarrhoea or yeast infections (thrush)

## *Antibiotic resistance is a growing problem*

If you have taken antibiotics you are more likely to carry resistant bacteria in your body

This means that future infections are more difficult to treat because antibiotics might not work when you really need them

You can also spread these resistant bacteria to other people such as your family

Antibiotics kill the natural 'good' bacteria in your body that keep the harmful bacteria under control

## *What can be done to make me better?*

If you have a cough or sore throat or other illness your doctor will help you select the best possible treatment

If an antibiotic could do more harm than good, your doctor will explain this to you

Your doctor will give you advice about how to manage your symptoms

## *How can I help?*

Carefully follow your doctor's instructions

If you have any questions, please feel free to ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist