[IMAGE]

# Don't Take Antibiotics for That Sore Throat!

Approximately three-quarters of adults who visit a primary care physician because of a sore throat are given an antibiotic, according to a recent study. Antibiotics can be effective at killing certain bacteria. Almost all sore throats are caused by viruses, however, which are untreatable with antibiotics. The most common bacterial cause of sore throats is a germ present in only five to 17% of adults annually.

The authors of a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* examined data from over 2,200 sore-throat patient visits in the National Ambulatory Medical Care Survey (NAMCS) from 1989 to 1999. They calculated rates of prescriptions for patients with sore throats, as well as the different antibiotics prescribed by physicians. The results showed that when antibiotics were prescribed, they were frequently unnecessary, and often the wrong ones. The recommended antibiotics were only prescribed in one-quarter of all visits. The use of recommended (correct) antibiotics also decreased, from 32% of cases in 1989 to 11% in 1999.

There are two main concerns for the overuse of antibiotics: unnecessary monetary costs and the development of a bacterial resistance to antibiotics. The more resistant bacteria become to antibiotics, the less effective these antibiotics will be when you truly need them.

The next time you have a sore throat, consider home remedies like chicken soup, extra vitamin C, and lots of rest and fluids - instead of antibiotics. For more information on children's health, visit http://www.chiroweb.com/tyh/childhood.html.

*Reference:* Linder JA, Stafford RS. Antibiotic treatment of adults with sore throat by community primary care physicians: A national survey, 1989-1999. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, September 12, 2001:286(10), pp. 1181-1186.

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http://www.toyourhealth.com/mpacms/tyh/article.php?id=740&no_paginate=true&no_b=true