

[IMAGE]

Infants and Antibiotics: Why It's a Bad Combination

By Editorial Staff

Does your infant need antibiotics? You'd better ask your doctor if they're absolutely necessary and if nondrug options are available before accepting that prescription. Here's why: Antibiotic use within the first six months of life may negatively impact neurodevelopment.

According to research published in *Psychopharmacology*, infants with any antibiotic exposure (use) before or by age 6 months have significantly lower overall cognitive and verbal comprehension abilities at 11 years of age. Children also have an increased of problems with hyperactivity, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), anxiety and emotional problems compared to children who received no antibiotics within their first six months.

In other words, early antibiotic use is no laughing matter. Of course, neither are certain infant conditions that may merit the use of antibiotics. However, it's also important to recognize that research also suggests some parents expect an antibiotic if their young child has a respiratory tract infection – even if the antibiotic won't help; and amazingly, some doctors are more likely to prescribe in such cases.

So, back to the start of this article and the take-home message: Always ask your doctor if an antibiotic or other drug is absolutely necessary before accepting the prescription, whether it's for your child or you. Inquire about the possible side effects and whether alternatives – even a "watchful waiting" approach – can be considered. You'll be glad you did.

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