

[IMAGE]

## Antibiotics: Bad News for Baby

By Editorial Staff

Many parents, but particularly new parents, worry *a lot* about their baby. Every snuffle, cough or fever 1 degree above normal means a call or visit to the pediatrician. Sometimes, the doctor will prescribe an antibiotic that's necessary to treat an infection. But many other times, as studies suggest, medical doctors prescribe antibiotics even for viral infections because parents often aren't willing to accept that their child will get better on his/her own; or aren't willing to wait to find out if the child's infection is bacterial or viral.

Who's to blame – the doctor or the parent? Let's not focus on the blame so much as the consequence.

According to a study published in *Genome Medicine*, even short courses of antibiotics during the first year of life can disrupt the intestinal microbiome (something antibiotics are known to do in all age groups). In the case of infants, this can lead to inflammatory bowel disease when they're older.

crying baby - Copyright â Stock Photo / Register Mark This isn't the first study to suggest an association between infant antibiotic exposure and IBD; it's just the latest. If your child requires a medication of any kind, always ask your doctor if it's absolutely necessary and if there are other, equally effective options that don't require medication. The goal should be to take as few drugs as possible over the course of your lifetime; for infants, of course, the goal should be to take none at all.

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