

[IMAGE]

Fighting Cold & Flu

By Editorial Staff

It's cold and flu season, and the sounds of coughing, sneezing and runny noses can be heard in nearly every home, office and shopping mall across the country. But don't run to the doctor and stock up on prescriptions just yet.

Colds, flus, most sore throats and acute bronchitis are caused by viruses, and antibiotics do not help fight viruses. Your prescription medication won't fight the virus, make you feel better, yield a quicker recovery or keep others from getting sick. In fact, because of the potentially serious side effects, taking antibiotics to treat a virus can do more harm than good.

In addition to failing to solve your problem, taking unnecessary antibiotics can result in an increase in antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria change in some way that reduces or eliminates the effectiveness of drugs, chemicals or other agents designed to cure or prevent infections. This means the next time you really need an antibiotic for a bacterial infection, it may not work.

Man blowing his nose into a tissue. - Copyright © Stock Photo / Register Mark **What Not To Do**

- Don't demand antibiotics from your doctor. They won't help treat your infection.
- Don't take an antibiotic for a viral infection like a cold, cough or the flu.
- Never take antibiotics prescribed for someone else.

When the scratchy throat, sinus headache and sniffles get to be too much to handle this season, resist the urge to reach for the easy answer. Talk to your doctor about natural alternatives for treating your cold or flu.

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