

Child health information factsheet

Antibiotic therapy

Your child has an infection that needs antibiotic treatment. This is a very common kind of medicine but it is important that it is taken correctly.

If you have any concerns about your child being allergic to the antibiotics prescribed, discuss this with your doctor before giving them the medicine.

How to give the medicine

Antibiotics can be given in several different ways. This leaflet gives information on the two ways we use most:

- Straight into the blood (intravenously)
- By mouth (orally)

Intravenous antibiotics

These are given through a cannula (small plastic tube) which is put into a vein. The most common places for this are in the back of your child's hand or in the crease of the elbow. However, sometimes other places may need to be used.

A nurse will give these antibiotics at regular intervals as prescribed by the doctor.

The doctor will decide the length of time your child will need intravenous antibiotics. This will depend on individual response to the treatment. Your child needs to stay in hospital while receiving antibiotics in this way.

Oral antibiotics

These come in tablet, capsule or liquid form in a variety of colours and flavours.

The liquid varieties can be taken off a spoon or from a syringe.

Talk to your nurse if your child has difficulty in taking tablets or capsules.

Always check with your nurse before breaking any tablets up to make it easier for your child to take. Some tablets have a special coating that should not be broken.

Some oral antibiotics will need to be taken with food, and others on an empty stomach. Your nurse will tell you about this.

Side effects

As with all medicines antibiotics have some side effects. The most common are a rash or diarrhoea and vomiting.

If your child has any problems please discuss these with your nurse or doctor, please feel free to ask questions at any time.

Going home

Your child may need to continue to take oral antibiotics at home. It is important that they are stored as advised by your nurse, usually in the fridge or a locked cupboard.

Your child must complete the prescribed course of antibiotics even if he or she seems well. This will help prevent the infection from recurring.

Medicine safety

Remember – child resistant bottle tops are not necessarily child proof.

- All medicines should be kept out of reach of children and only taken as written on the bottle
- If the medicine has to be kept in a fridge, make sure your child cannot get to it
- Please dispose of any unused medicines by returning them to a pharmacy (chemist) as soon as the course is finished.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact

The paediatric assessment unit: **023 8079 4628**

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8079 4688 for help.