

Antibiotic therapy

Information for patients, parents and guardians

We have given you this factsheet because your child has an infection that needs antibiotic treatment.

Antibiotics are a very common kind of medicine but it is important that they are taken correctly.

If you think your child may be allergic to the antibiotics we have prescribed, please check with your doctor before giving them the medicine.

How are antibiotics given?

Antibiotics can be given in several different ways. In this leaflet, we will explain the two most common methods:

- **intravenous (IV) antibiotics** (when the medicine is given directly into the blood through a vein)
- **oral antibiotics** (when the medicine is taken by mouth)

Intravenous (IV) antibiotics

Intravenous (IV) antibiotics are given by a nurse. The nurse will use a cannula (a small plastic tube). They will put the cannula into a vein and tape it to the skin. We usually use the back of your child's hand or the crease of their elbow. Sometimes we may need to use another area.

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

The doctor will decide how long your child will have IV antibiotics for. This will depend on their individual response to the treatment.

Your child may need to stay in hospital until they have had all of their IV antibiotics. In some cases, if your child is well enough, they may be able to go home and come back to the ambulatory clinic for their antibiotics each day.

If your child is well but needs to have long-term IV antibiotics (for longer than seven days), a community nursing team may be able to give your child their IV antibiotics at your home.

Oral antibiotics

Oral antibiotics come as tablets, capsules or a liquid, in a variety of colours and flavours. The liquid medicines can be taken from either a spoon or a syringe. Please let your child's nurse or doctor know how your child would prefer to take their antibiotics (in tablet or liquid form).

Some oral antibiotics need to be taken with food, and others on an empty stomach. Your child's nurse will explain how to give your child their antibiotics.

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

Side effects

As with all medicines, antibiotics have some side effects. The most common side effects are:

- rash
- diarrhoea
- nausea and / or vomiting.

If your child has any side effects while they are taking their antibiotics, please tell their nurse or doctor.

Medicine safety at home

Your child may need to continue to take oral antibiotics at home. It is important that they are stored as advised by your child's nurse, doctor or pharmacist. This is usually in the fridge or a safe cupboard away from young children.

- Keep all medicines out of reach of children.
- Make sure medicine is only taken as your child's nurse or doctor advises.
- Please return any unused medicines to any pharmacy (chemist) as soon as the course is finished.

Please note: child-resistant bottle tops are not

necessarily child-proof.

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

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us:

Your child's ward:

Children's (paediatric) short stay unit (PSSU):
023 8120 4628

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