Viruses or Bacteria
What's got you sick?

Antibiotics only treat bacterial infections. Viral illnesses cannot be treated with antibiotics. When an antibiotic is not prescribed, ask your healthcare professional for tips on how to relieve symptoms and feel better.

Illness	Usual Cause		Antibiotic Needed
	Viruses	Bacteria	
Cold/Runny Nose	✓		NO
Bronchitis/Chest Cold (in otherwise healthy children and adults)	✓		NO
Whooping Cough		✓	Yes
Flu	✓		NO
Strep Throat		✓	Yes
Sore Throat (except strep)	✓		NO
Fluid in the Middle Ear (otitis media with effusion)	✓		NO
Urinary Tract Infection		✓	Yes

Antibiotics Aren't Always the Answer

www.cdc.gov/getsmart

GET SMART
Know When Antibiotics Work

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

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