

## Q. Do antibiotics work all the time?

**A:** No, for example MRSA (methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*) is a *staph infection* that is resistant to most antibiotics. Now, only the most powerful antibiotics work on MRSA. Because this bacteria is so deadly, it's important that you tell your doctor if you have recently been hospitalized or admitted to a nursing home. There's a possibility you may have been exposed to MRSA and your doctor needs to know this especially if you are going to have surgery.



## It's a Fact!

Before the discovery of antibiotics, many people died from infections like blood poisoning and pneumonia.... Antibiotics were the first of the "wonder drugs"

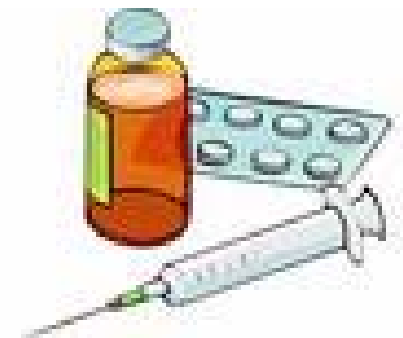
Bacteria have become resistant to many antibiotics.

**What To Do Before** ..... gives you the facts and makes you antibiotic savvy

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Protect Yourself

## What To Do Before.....A Consumer's Guide to Antibiotics



### Q. What are antibiotics?

**A:** Antibiotics are drugs that fight bacteria that are responsible for different types of sicknesses. They are considered among the first of the wonder drugs because before they were available, people very often died from what are called “infectious” diseases; blood poisoning, cholera.. Antibiotics are very powerful drugs and they should be used with caution.

### Q. What’s the difference between an antiseptic and an antibiotic?

**A:** An antiseptic is used to kill germs on all sorts of surfaces including desktops, cups and glasses, doorknobs, bed frames, thermometers and even your skin. Yes, germs do live on your skin. An antibiotic is a medicine used to kill germs that are in your blood stream.

## What To Do Before.....

### Q. Are there other types of antibiotics in addition to penicillin?

**A:** Yes. Penicillin was the first antibiotic discovered; however, since then, medical science has developed many other drugs that belong to the antibiotic family. This was done because some types of antibiotics are more effective against certain types of bacteria. Your doctor will determine what type of bacteria you’ve got and then prescribe an antibiotic that will be effective.



### Q. Should you take antibiotics before you enter the hospital?

**A:** This is something that you should discuss with your doctor. Explain to your doctor that you know about hospital infections and don’t want to pick up something while you’re a patient. Your doctor will take into consideration your overall health as well as the reason you’re being admitted and then decide if antibiotics should be prescribed.

### Q. Is there a danger if you take antibiotics when they aren’t needed?

**A:** Yes. Using too many antibiotics when they are not needed can lead to a situation where the antibiotics are no longer effective against bacteria. This happens when the antibiotic doesn’t kill all the bacteria and a few survive. They eventually begin growing again; only this time they can resist the effects of the antibiotics.