

# What You Need to Know About Antibiotic Resistance and Diagnostic Tests

What is a diagnostic test?

It's a test ordered by healthcare professionals to help determine what's making a person sick.

What if I have a cough and/or a sore throat and I think I need an antibiotic?

Antibiotics only treat bacterial infections, not viral ones. Antibiotics do not work for infections caused by viruses like common colds, influenza (flu), most sore throats and bronchitis, and some ear infections.

Shouldn't I just ask my doctor for an antibiotic just in case?

No. Taking antibiotics when they aren't needed is really bad for you. It weakens your immune system and kills good bacteria, increasing the chances that you could get even sicker. Trust the advice of your caregiver.

Is there a way to find out what is making me sick?

Ask your doctor to perform a diagnostic test to help determine what the cause of your sickness might be. (i.e. To determine if you have a bacterial or viral infection.)

What if my doctor doesn't offer me a diagnostic test?

Ask if one is available. If you are given a prescription without a test, ask your doctor if you really need the antibiotic and how s/he knows that antibiotic is necessary and will be effective.

Is there anything else I should know?

Yes:

- Don't demand antibiotics.
- If you are prescribed an antibiotic, complete the full course.
- Do not save any antibiotics for the next time you get sick.
- Only take antibiotics that are prescribed to you.

Can I learn more about antibiotic resistance and diagnostic tests?

Visit these web resources:

- [dx.advamed.org/diseases/antibiotic-resistance-0](http://dx.advamed.org/diseases/antibiotic-resistance-0)
- [battlesuperbugs.org](http://battlesuperbugs.org)



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