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ANTIBIOTIC USE PRECAUTIONS (4/14)

Your doctor has prescribed an antibiotic to assist in resolving your infection. Improvement is expected within 72 hours. Antibiotics work only for susceptible bacterial infections, not viral, fungal or resistant bacterial infections. Because oral antibiotics are absorbed throughout the body, there are some side effects you should be aware of and precautions you should take:

- If you develop any unusual symptoms while taking the antibiotics, please notify your doctor.
- Report all pre-existing antibiotic allergies to your doctor. Signs suggestive of an allergic reaction are rash, itching, hives, fever, shortness of breath, as well as throat and joint swelling.
- Adhere to the dosage schedule and complete the entire course your doctor has advised. Do not discontinue this medication without your doctor's advice. Inappropriate use increases the risk of antibiotic resistance.
- It is not uncommon to develop loose stools with the use of antibiotics. If excessive diarrhea or any abdominal cramping occurs, please notify your doctor.
- Notify your doctor if you develop a yeast infection. It may present with discrete and confluent white plaques sticking to the mucous membranes of the mouth, tongue or vagina.
- We suggest you begin a **probiotic** when taking antibiotics to counter the negative effects of the antibiotic. Continue taking it for one to two weeks after the antibiotic is finished.

Probiotics are beneficial or so-called "friendly" bacteria, which provides an important function in the body. Lactobacillus acidophilus is the best known of a type of the acidophilus bacteria. Probiotics have the following benefits:

- Acidify the colon to inhibit the growth of harmful bacteria;
- Normalize bowel movements, which helps decrease the time it takes for end products of metabolism to move through the digestive system;
- Stop diarrhea and constipation;
- Eliminates gas and bloating in the intestines;
- Reduce bad breath caused by an unclean bowel;
- Restore the production of Vitamin K and B Vitamins, especially Vitamin B12, in the intestines;
- Release their own natural antibiotics which combat the unfriendly intestinal bacteria and Candida - these natural antibiotics with no known side effects even enter our blood stream and can combat systemic infections (infections in the body beyond the intestines).

The most reliable quantity of live beneficial bacteria cultures can be found in probiotic supplements with the correct and verified labeling provided enough Colon Forming Units (CFU's) and the right probiotic strains to actually be effective and provide health benefits. The amount of CFU's of a probiotic strain in food and yogurt is largely unknown. Alternatively, it can be found in acidophilus milk and in the form of powders, capsules tablets and liquids that are available at health food stores. Lactobacillus acidophilus is measured by the amount of viable bacteria per dosage (in the millions). This is a powder or capsule form of the normal, friendly bacteria that live in our intestines (called flora). Our intestinal flora helps regulate our digestion and stool patterns. Yeast also lives in our intestines. The yeast and the bacterial flora are constantly competing for space, and generally they keep each other in check. Sometimes, however, our bacterial flora can get depleted, such as when taking antibiotics. This allows the yeast to overgrow, which can then lead to a variety of problems:

- Thrush
- Yeast diaper rash
- Vaginal yeast infection
- Diarrhea
- Allergic reaction if you are allergic to molds, such as Candida

Taking probiotics replenishes our bacterial flora and reduces overgrowth of yeast.

HOW AND WHEN TO TAKE PROBIOTICS

Probiotics are available at most health food and nutrition stores in two forms: capsules and powder. Begin probiotics at the start of any of the above problems, as well as when taking antibiotics. Continue taking it for four weeks after the problem or antibiotic is finished. Dosage is different with each brand and preparation so follow the instructions on the packaging.

- **Adults** – Take the capsules as directed on the bottle.
- **Children** – Use capsules if able to swallow, otherwise give 1 teaspoon of the powder once a day in milk, juice, or food.
- **Infants** – make a paste using water or breast milk and rub this once a day in baby’s mouth, or put 1 teaspoon of the powder in formula once a day if bottle feeding.