**Virus** vs. **Bacteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Virus</th>
<th>Bacteria</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Viruses</strong> are particles that invade your body’s cells. Viruses contain genetic material (DNA or RNA) and a protein coat. Viruses take many shapes and are much smaller than bacteria.</td>
<td><strong>Bacteria</strong> are one-celled organisms that take several shapes - spheres, rods, spirals. They are found everywhere - in food, dirt, and on our bodies. Bacteria can live outside our body’s cells. Most bacteria are good - such as those that help with digestion, but some can cause infections.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Viruses</strong> cause diseases such as the common cold, many sinus infections, acute bronchitis and most sore throats. The body fights against viral infections by producing a fever or inflammation.</td>
<td><strong>Bacteria</strong> cause infections such as strep throat by invading the body’s cells. The body fights against bacteria by producing a fever or inflammation. Symptoms of bacterial infections are similar to those caused by viral infections.</td>
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| **Antibiotics cannot kill viruses.** Antibiotics will not help a viral infection or stop the spread of a viral infection to others. Taking antibiotics for viral infections can increase the chance of an antibiotic-resistant infection later.  
- Rest, drink fluids  
- Relieve symptoms with over the counter medications  
- Call your doctor if your symptoms worsen | **Bacterial** infections usually need to be treated with an antibiotic - medications that kill bacteria. If you are prescribed an antibiotic, follow instructions closely:  
- take all the medication as directed even if you feel better  
- do not share antibiotics or save them for the next time you are sick |

**Sick?**

When antibiotics are misused, bacteria can develop resistance to the antibiotics over time. Antibiotic resistance affects everyone. **YOU** can help keep antibiotics working!

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