



# ANTIBIOTICS - can we reduce our use?



With international calls to cut down on the over-use of antibiotics, how can we reduce our personal dependence on them? Gemma Hurditch answers for CNM (College of Naturopathic Medicine).

Antibiotics are life-savers when used appropriately and when essential. However, their capacity to save lives has been endangered by the emergence of an antibiotic-resistance crisis for humans. What has contributed to the crisis is not only the over-prescription of antibiotics as a first resort medicine, but by the routine mass-medication of farm animals to compensate for the fact that animals are kept in intensive conditions where risk of disease runs high.

Natural health practitioners believe that the use of antibiotics should be sparing and in conjunction with other measures to mitigate their adverse effects. This is because antibiotics come with negative effects on the gut which can impact our general health and immunity. So how can we reduce our dependence on antibiotics in the first place? A three pronged approach can help:

## Promote natural immunity

Eat a diet abundant in organic vegetables, fruit and raw unsalted nuts. This will ensure that levels of vitamin C, bioflavonoids, vitamin A and zinc are at optimal levels for immune function.

Remove white flour and added sugar from your diet to further boost immunity. Eat plenty of onions, garlic, turmeric and spices to provide extra immune boosting, and virus and bacteria fighting phytonutrients (beneficial plant chemicals) into your meals.

If you eat animal produce opt for organic to avoid being dosed with antibiotics second hand.

Don't smoke. Smokers have a much increased risk of infection and illness.

Get enough sleep to repair and to feel revitalised and ready for the day.

Avoid stress. Find ways to relax and feel fulfilled.

Put regular exercise and daylight high on your agenda.

## Reduce exposure to infection

Wash your hands regularly with ordinary soap and warm water.

Do not put your fingers in your eyes, mouth or nose, or in any open sores or cuts if you haven't washed your hands first (and wash again afterwards). Most bacteria enters through these points of contact.

Reduce your contact with any allergens or triggers; these could be true allergies such as allergy to cats (determined by a skin prick test), or something not so easily identified, such as sick-building syndrome whereby mould or a contaminated air conditioning unit is contributing to ill-health and infection.

Repeated or low grade chronic infection needs to be investigated for environmental or intolerance related causes, as continued stress on the body can undermine health.

## Consider natural remedies

Severe infections and infections unresponsive to natural treatment must be referred to your medical doctor.

In some cases your natural health practitioner can help you on the road to health by choosing natural remedies that are appropriate, and in the correct dosage for you. For example: Oregano oil, echinacea, golden seal, astragalus, andrographis, elderberry, cranberry and various other herbs can be chosen to suit the site and type of infection.

Manuka honey, tea tree and lavender oils are all useful in combating skin infection. Acne and other skin infections can respond well to baking soda, salicylic acid and apple cider vinegar topical applications.

Belladonna, Ferrum Phos and Pulsatilla are all useful homeopathic remedies which can support a return to health from issues such as fever, sore throat and styes.

Over-dependence on antibiotics can occur when people feel unable to get to the root cause of their health problems. CNM natural health practitioners are trained to help their clients identify contributory factors; to offer guidance on specific dietary and lifestyle choices to address them; and appropriate natural therapies which can promote healing and wellness.

## Attend a free Open Afternoon: 1st July

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