

# Information for patients and their carers about antibiotic treatment

If you are in hospital and you are being given an antibiotic don't be afraid to ask about your treatment. Please consider asking your doctor, nurse or pharmacist these 5 questions:

## 1 Why am I being given an antibiotic?

Antibiotics are medicines used to treat infections. The type of infection you have dictates the type and length of antibiotic treatment you will receive.

## 2 Can I take my antibiotic by mouth rather than by intravenous injection?

Antibiotics given by mouth are usually just as effective as antibiotics given into the vein particularly once you are starting to feel better. Taking antibiotics by mouth means you are likely to get home sooner.

## 3 How long will I have to take my antibiotic for?

This is usually no longer than 7 days for most common infections – though in many cases it can be 5 days or less.

## 4 Will I need to take antibiotics when I get home?

If you have improved quickly in hospital and are taking antibiotics by mouth it is possible you can complete the course of antibiotics at home.

## 5 How can I reduce my chances of getting another infection?

If your general health is not that good, then you may be more likely to get infections. So anything you can do to improve your health such as eating a healthy diet, stopping smoking, taking more exercise will help. Also if you have a cold or flu, when coughing or sneezing use paper tissues to 'catch it, kill it, bin it' and remember to wash your hands.