Taking Antibiotics

Antibiotics are powerful medicines that fight bacterial infections. Used properly, antibiotics can save lives, by killing bacteria or preventing them from reproducing. It is important, however, to only take antibiotics that have been prescribed by a doctor.

Why you should only take antibiotics prescribed by a doctor

We have been hearing from sex workers recently that they are getting antibiotics from different places and taking these to prevent or treat common sexually transmitted infections such as chlamydia and gonorrhoea.

If these infections aren't treated properly, they can cause long term problems, such as a serious infection called Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID), which can lead to pain and scarring, plus problems with future pregnancy.

Symptoms such as soreness or discharge are not always caused by gonorrhoea or chlamydia. They may have other causes which need to be investigated.

Each infection requires a specific antibiotic for effective treatment.

Taking the wrong antibiotic will not work. You can't be sure that the antibiotics you get from a friend, or the Internet, or a shop in your country are the right ones.

We don't recommend that you take antibiotics every day to prevent sexually transmitted infections. Taking unnecessary antibiotics may lead to health problems, or affect other medicines.

If you take the wrong antibiotics, some bacteria may survive and be more difficult to treat. This means that the antibiotics might not work at all next time.

You need to be tested and treated properly for chlamydia, gonorrhoea and other sexual transmitted infections at your sexual health clinic or by your doctor. You should also see your doctor if you have symptoms of a urinary tract infection, such as pain on urination.

You might pass your infection on to clients or to your partner if you aren't treated properly.

Testing and treatment at sexual health clinics is free and confidential. You don't need a Medicare card. An interpreter can be provided for you.

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