

Mayo Clinic Minute: What to do and not do when your child has a viral fever

Video	Audio
	The most common circulating viruses for the fall and winter, such as colds and flus, rely on our immune system to fight them off. So don't expect your doctor to prescribe an antibiotic.
Nipunie Rajapakse, M.D. Pediatric Infectious Diseases Mayo Clinic	"Antibiotics don't kill off viruses."
	Dr. Rajapakse says a common misconception she tries to dispel is that children with fevers need to be on an antibiotic before they can return to school or day care.
	"Giving a child with a viral infection, an antibiotic, does not help them at all. It won't help them get better faster, and it can cause them harm."
	She says there's also the issue of overuse, which is driving antibiotic-resistant bacteria and making infections more difficult to treat.
	"We're trying to reduce the instances that this is happening in bacterial infections. If you have one, an antibiotic can be lifesaving. And, so, these are things like pneumonia or blood infections, or infections of the bone, for example, where antibiotics definitely should be used. And in order to keep them effective for these types of serious infections, we really need to only use them when we know that they'll be effective and treat patients."
	For viral infections, fever-reducing medications, such as acetaminophen or ibuprofen, can help reduce symptoms while the body fights off the virus.
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm DeeDee Stiepan.