

Antibiotic shortage: What to know if you can't find amoxicillin

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According to the Food and Drug Administration, a national shortage of different medications, including a common antibiotic, is expected to last several months.

"The most notable one is probably amoxicillin. It is a common antibiotic

that we use to treat a variety of childhood infections, including ear infections, [strep throat](#), and pneumonia," says Dr. Nipunie Rajapakse, a pediatric infectious diseases physician with the Mayo Clinic Children's Center.

She says parents may notice this as they take their [children](#) to a health care provider, are being prescribed an antibiotic, and have difficulty tracking the medication down at the pharmacy.

"The shortages seem to be especially impacting the oral suspension formulations of these medications," she says. "It's especially tricky for parents of young kids who can't swallow a pill or a tablet."

Advice if you can't find amoxicillin

Dr. Rajapakse offers advice to those who experience this situation. It starts with some patience.

"If you run into a situation where you've been prescribed amoxicillin, and you're not able to find it for your child, it's important to talk to your pharmacist as well as the [health care provider](#) who prescribed the medication because there are other alternatives that can be used," she says.

Physicians and pharmacists are now looking to second or third-line antibiotics to help with bacterial infections that need treatment.

"Most [health care providers](#) should be familiar with what those are for the specific infection your child is being diagnosed with and should be able to recommend a different antibiotic to help treat them if you're unable to find amoxicillin," she says.

Alternatively, they may also be able to recommend different strategies

like how to crush pills or open capsules if those forms of amoxicillin are available, but your child is not able to swallow them.

Secondary infections

Dr. Rajapakse says that it's important to remember that colds, flu, [respiratory syncytial virus](#) (RSV) and COVID-19 are all respiratory viruses that cannot be treated with antibiotics.

However, secondary bacterial infections, such as [ear infections](#), bacterial pneumonia and sinus infections can happen after a surge of respiratory viral infections.

"This is why we're advocating for vaccination as the best way to prevent infections from viruses like COVID-19 and influenza. These can not only prevent the infection with the viruses but also reduces your chance of having a complication or a [secondary bacterial infection](#), which can come after one of these [viral infections](#)," says Dr. Rajapakse.

Provided by Mayo Clinic

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