

Getting better without antibiotics

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Given the option, many women with symptoms of urinary tract infections are choosing to avoid antibiotics and give their bodies a chance to heal naturally, finds research in BioMed Central's open access journal *BMC Family Practice*. The research shows that 70% of women with symptoms of uncomplicated urinary tract infections who did not use antibiotics for a week were cured or showed improvement.

Antimicrobial-resistant bacteria are already a big problem and the incidence of 'superbugs', which are resistant to several antibiotics, is on the rise. Over [use of antibiotics](#) increases the chances of [disease causing bacteria](#) developing resistance to antibiotics. Obviously for serious bacterial infections antibiotics can be a life saver, but they do not work on viruses, and for many minor bacterial infections the body's own immune system is more than capable of fighting off the invaders on its own.

In this study, based at the University of Amsterdam, women with symptoms of uncomplicated [urinary tract infections](#) were asked if they would be willing to postpone taking antibiotics. A third of the women asked were willing to delay treatment and a week later about half of these had still not used antibiotics and more than two thirds of these were better or had improvement in their clinical condition.

Dr Bart Knottnerus, from the Academic Medical Center of the University of Amsterdam, who led this study commented that "Women may be more receptive to the idea of delaying treatment than is commonly assumed by many clinicians. Given proper observations to

simply doing nothing, or giving [pain medication](#) instead of an antibiotic, is an effective treatment and one which will reduce the risk of developing antibiotic-resistant bacteria."

More information: Women with symptoms of uncomplicated urinary tract infection are often willing to delay antibiotic treatment: a prospective cohort study, Bart J Knottnerus, Suzanne E Geerlings, Eric P Moll van Charante and Gerben ter Riet, *BMC Family Practice* 2013 14:70, www.biomedcentral.com/1471-2296/14/70/abstract

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