

# WHY ANTIBIOTICS ARE IMPORTANT FOR... CYSTIC FIBROSIS PATIENTS

Cystic fibrosis patients are prone to getting infections, so antibiotics are an essential part of treatment. This means that they need to take antibiotics regularly for their entire lives, both to treat infections and to prevent them.

## What is Cystic Fibrosis?

- A condition where the body produces **thick and sticky mucus**.
- As a result, lungs can get 'clogged up', making it **difficult to breath and even to digest food**.

## How can Cystic Fibrosis cause infections?

- Normally, lungs use mucus to trap bacteria that we breathe in, and then it is removed by coughing before they can cause an infection. But the thick mucus produced by cystic fibrosis is hard to cough up, so **lungs become prone to irritation, swelling, and infection**. These infections can severely damage the lungs.
- Thick mucus also makes it hard to digest food, so patients need to be very careful with what they eat: it **becomes difficult to consume enough energy and the right balance of nutrients to fight off infections**.

**Antibiotics are crucial for controlling and preventing these infections and improving survival rates.**

Most cystic fibrosis patients will need antibiotics to survive. Antibiotic resistance means that current antibiotics may not work. In addition, few new treatments are being developed. This means that cystic fibrosis survival rates may decrease because doctors may not be able to control infections.

**It is VITAL that we preserve our antibiotics, minimise the spread of bacteria, and protect cystic fibrosis patients from catching antibiotic-resistant infections.**

- 1. Don't ask and don't expect antibiotics for colds, sore throats, or flu—these are caused by viruses so antibiotics don't work.**
- 2. Only take antibiotics given to you by your doctor and EXACTLY as written on the bottle and always complete the full course.**
- 3. Never give your antibiotics to other people.**

