Antibiotic-Associated Diarrhea

Symptoms | Prevention | Treatment

(AAD)

Antibiotic Associated Diarrhea is a common complication of antibiotic treatment. It refers to the passage of loose, watery stool, at least three times per day, in individuals who are taking or recently took antibiotics.[1]

Up to 1/3
of people who take antibiotics develop diarrhea.[2]

AAD Fast Facts:[3]

- AAD varies with the type of antibiotic taken.
- Most cases of AAD are mild, requiring no further treatment.
- Sometimes a more serious type of AAD can occur which is caused by the bug (bacterium) Clostridium difficile (C.diff).

Symptoms of AAD:

Profuse watery diarrhea with mucus and/or blood &

Fever

Abdominal pain or tenderness

Dehydration

Nausea and loss of appetite[3,4]

Treating Diarrhea

- **Drink plenty of fluids** containing adequate amounts of water, sugar and salts to stay hydrated.
- **Wash your hands** frequently with soap and water, especially before eating or preparing food & after using the washroom.
- There is no special diet, but it is a good idea to **avoid spicy and fatty foods as well as dairy.**

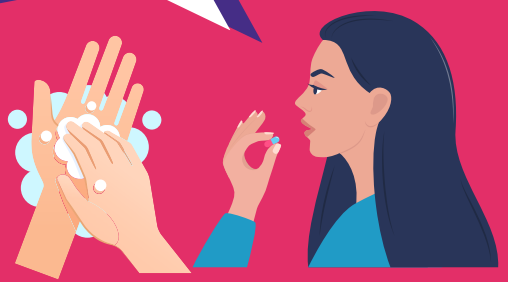
Speak to your healthcare profesional

In some cases your doctor may decide to stop the antibiotic until symptoms resolve. Your doctor may also order some tests to determine the cause of diarrhea.

Preventing AAD:

- Wash your hands regularly for at least 20 seconds.
- Use antibiotics wisely, as prescribed.
- Never use antibiotics prescribed for someone else and never use leftover antibiotics from a previous illness.
- Probiotics such as Saccharomyces boulardii are recommended to prevent AAD.
- Consult your health care professional about taking a probiotic.

Saccharomyces boulardii reduces the risk of having AAD by 80%[5]



References

1. Kelly, C. P., & Lamont, J. T. (2021, September 17). Patient education: Antibiotic-associated diarrhea caused by Clostridioides difficile (Beyond the Basics). UpToDate. Retrieved March 1, 2023, from https://www.uptodate.com/contents/antibiotic-associated-diarrhea-caused-by-clostridioides-difficile-beyond-the-basics
2. The Ottawa Hospital. (2016). Antibiotic-associated Diarrhea Patient Information. Retrieved March 5, 2023, from https://www.ottawahospital.on.ca/en/documents/2017/01/9-17-antibiotic-associated-diarrhea-pt-info-2013.pdf/.
3. Barbut, F., & Meynard, J. L. (2002, June 8). Managing antibiotic associated diarrhoea. BMJ (Clinical research ed.). Retrieved March 1, 2023, from https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1123310/
4. Lewis , J. L. (2022). Dehydration - hormonal and metabolic disorders. Merck Manuals Consumer Version. Retrieved March 10, 2023, from https://www.merckmanuals.com/en-ca/home/hormonal-and-metabolic-disorders/water-balance/dehydration
5. Kotowska M, Albrecht P, Szajewska H. Saccharomyces boulardii in the prevention of antibiotic-associated diarrhoea in children: a randomized double-blind placebo-controlled trial. Aliment Pharmacol Ther. 2005 Mar 1;21(5):583-90. doi: 10.1111/j.1365-2036.2005.02356.x. PMID: 15740542.

This infographic was made possible due to an unrestricted educational grant from:

Florastor