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Antibiotics for acute bronchitis and bronchiolitis infections

MSF welcomes the rigorous and comprehensive review of clinical practice guidelines, systematic reviews and meta-analyses of randomized controlled trials of antibiotic therapy for bronchitis and bronchiolitis.

This review of data from 1996 to September 2020, reporting comparisons between different antibiotics and/or antibiotic classes and/or comparisons to placebo for bronchitis and bronchiolitis has led to the two following recommendations:

- Antibiotics are not recommended for acute bronchitis in otherwise healthy people.
- Antibiotics are not recommended for bronchiolitis in otherwise healthy children unless there is clear evidence for or a strong suspicion of a secondary bacterial infection.

MSF does not recommend to administer any antibiotics for the treatment of acute bronchitis in otherwise healthy adults and children and bronchiolitis in children in its programs. An antibiotherapy is recommended only in the few cases where a bacterial infection is suspected from the clinical assessment.

MSF recommends that the 23rd Expert Committee on the Selection and Use of Essential Medicines consider these elements in its decision-making process.

For Médecins Sans Frontières

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