

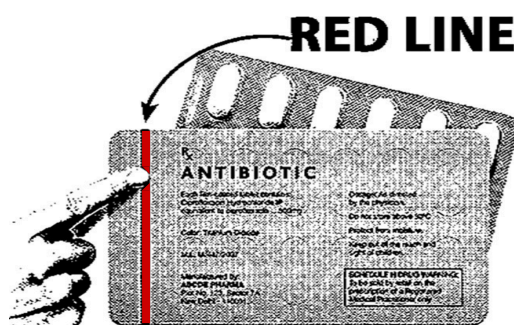
What are Red Line Medicines?

Have you noticed that some medicine strips have a red line on the packets?

These red lines mean that such medicines are not to be consumed without a doctor's prescription. They are not to be bought at the pharmacy by ourselves for self-medication or to be shared among family and friends.

And, when the doctor prescribes them, it is important to finish the full course as per the prescription.

Antibiotics are one such key medicines that have red lines on their packets.



Why do antibiotics have red lines on their packets? Antibiotics are a type of antimicrobial medicine. They kill bacteria and help us get rid of various bacterial infections. However, most of us don't know how to use these medicines correctly. We think they are miracle drugs and can get rid of all infections. But they don't work on viral and fungal infections.

Even for different bacterial infections, there can be different antibiotics. Doctors can find out if we have bacterial infections and prescribe the correct antibiotics against them. Also, many times, we begin to feel good after taking a few doses of antibiotics, and don't take the rest. This is dangerous because not all the bacteria have been killed by the few doses. The ones remaining are the stronger, more resistant ones. If their population grows substantially, they give rise to infections that are difficult to treat using existing antibiotics. Such infections are called antimicrobial resistant or superbug infections. Such superbugs are already around us and we don't want them growing more. Because of these reasons, it is important that we use antibiotics carefully. When used carefully, antibiotics will stay effective and help us fight many deadly infections. If not, we have to face superbugs frequently. The red line is a reminder for us to act responsibly and be superheroes against superbugs.

Activity

1. Look into your family medicine box.
2. Sort all the medicines by dosage forms (that is tablets, capsules, syrups, powders).
3. Identify all the medicines that have red lines.
4. List the brand name of the medicine and the underlying chemical formulation of the red line medicines. For example, Dolo is the brand name, and Paracetamol is the chemical.
5. Research to find out if the red line medicines in your box are antibiotics. You can search on the internet, ask any para-med or a doctor who lives close to your home.
6. Find out if the antibiotics were purchased with a doctor's prescription.
7. Make a table like this, and fill it with the information that you have collected.

Red Line Medicines			
Brand name	Formulation	Antibiotic? Yes / No	Prescription? Yes / No

This activity is a part of the World AMR Awareness Week 2024 campaign by CSIR-CCMB and Superheroes against Superbugs.

CSIR-CCMB is a premier biology research institute in Hyderabad.

Superheroes against Superbugs is an educational and public engagement initiative on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in India.