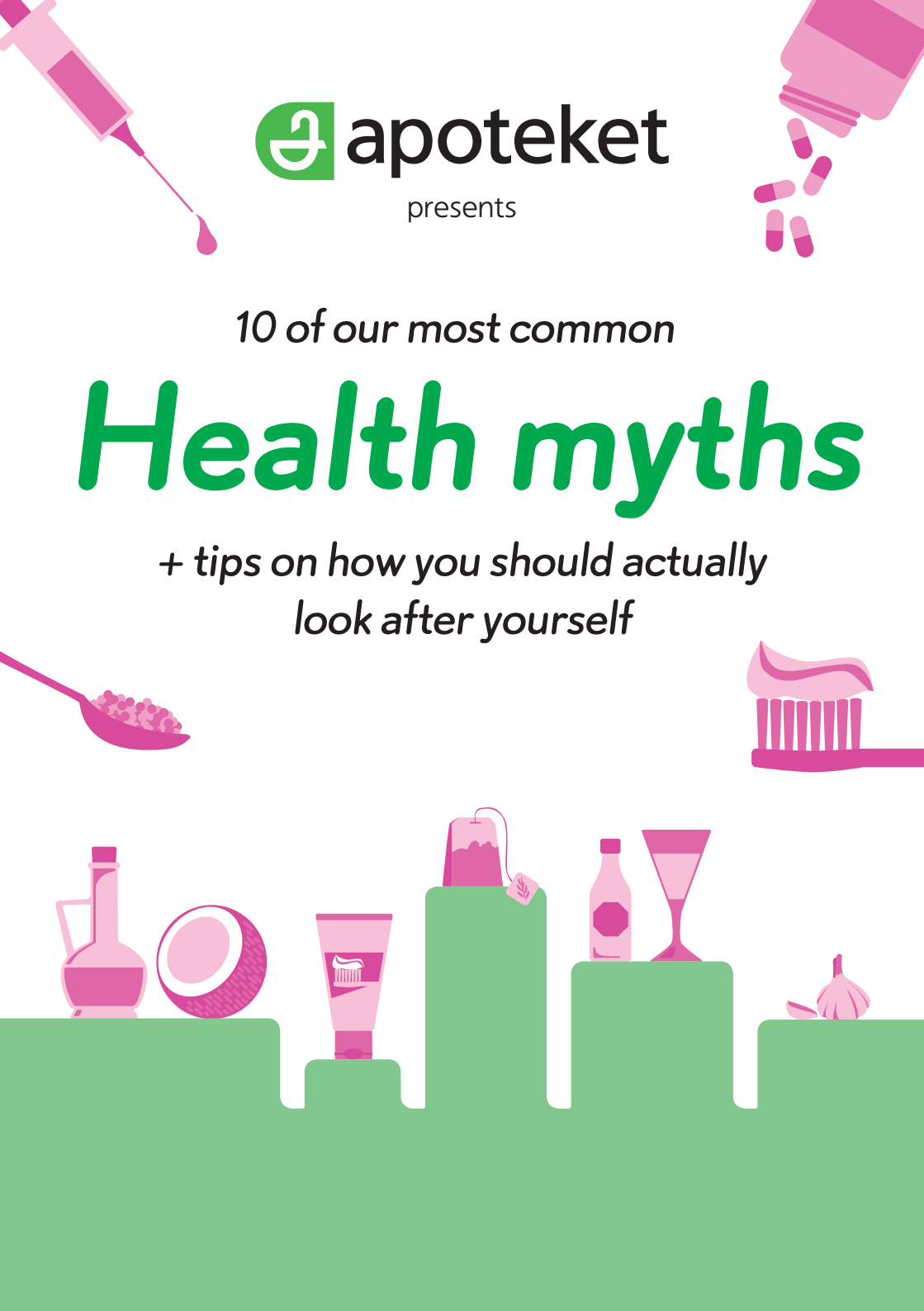




*10 of our most common*

# *Health myths*

*+ tips on how you should actually  
look after yourself*



## Antibiotics are not for cold relief

Many people suffer from a cough, a runny nose and a high temperature in the colds season. It is also common to have problems with the sinuses, ears and throat. As many as one in five people in Sweden believe that antibiotics help to cure a cold.

The truth is that colds are caused by a viral infection, which cannot be cured with antibiotics. It is also a fact that mild bacterial infections are overcome just as well without antibiotics.

So don't listen to myths, and instead follow the three key principles: rest, warmth and fluids.



## Regular use of fluoride toothpaste is not harmful

Rumours abound that fluoride is harmful to the brain, especially in children. Too much fluoride is not good, as it carries a risk of fluorosis, which causes staining on the teeth. It has also been reported in the United States that an excessively high intake of fluoride, through drinking water with added fluoride, may affect brain development in children. Fluoride is added to drinking water in some US states, but not in Sweden. It should be stressed that these risks are associated with very high levels of fluoride that do not enter the body when you brush your teeth with fluoride toothpaste.



Fluoride strengthens and protects the teeth against decay. Fluoride is good for us and our children, and is needed to strengthen the enamel of our teeth. It is an effective way of reducing tooth decay and helps to protect the environment around the tooth, but it is not good for children to consume excessively high levels. There are therefore specially adapted toothpastes for children, containing a lower level of fluoride.

Brushing the teeth with fluoride toothpaste is the most significant factor in the reduced level of tooth decay in Sweden. We therefore advise everyone, children and adults alike, to use fluoride toothpaste.

## Tea leaves do not cure eye problems

A beauty tip sometimes given is to put cool, moist teabags on your eyes to reduce swelling and redness. This trick is sometimes also claimed to be effective against sore eyes.



If you are affected by sore eyes, it will usually fade by itself. If pus makes your eye sticky or your eye is difficult to open in the morning, you can clean it with a cotton bud dipped in ordinary tap water or an eye lotion such as Apoteket's Eye Lotion (Ögonvatten). There are also non-prescription eye ointments from Apoteket that can be used. If you have pus that persists for more than 3 to 4 days, we recommend that you contact a healthcare professional.

## Garlic in the ear does not cure ear inflammation

Ear inflammation can be very troublesome, in both children and adults. Has anyone ever advised you to put a clove of garlic in your outer ear to fight the inflammation? You should be cautious about following this advice. There is a risk of the garlic causing irritation and making the symptoms worse.

In most cases, ear inflammation fades away by itself. You can alleviate the symptoms by taking non-prescription painkillers, and by placing an extra pillow under your head at night to reduce the pressure. Use a nasal spray if swelling makes it difficult for you to breathe.

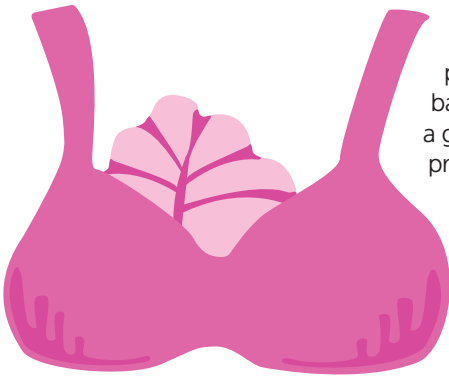
Contact your doctor if your symptoms do not subside within 24 hours. Ear inflammation may sometimes need to be treated with antibiotics.



## Warmth rather than a cabbage leaf in your bra

Clogged milk ducts can be very painful and make you feel distinctly ill.

A tip commonly encountered both on mums' forums and among friends and family is to put whole cabbage leaves in your bra. It is said to have the ability to "draw out the badness" from the affected breast. Is that true? No, if the cabbage has any effect, it is because the cabbage leaves may perhaps warm the breast a little. There are better ways of dealing with clogged milk ducts, such as a hot shower before breastfeeding or placing a warm towel on the breast.



If your milk ducts have become clogged, it is best to carry on breastfeeding if possible, and it is a good idea to let your baby suck more often than usual. It is also a good idea to use a roomy bra that does not press on your milk glands and milk ducts.

If you have major problems with clogged milk ducts, or if it is uncomfortable and difficult to breastfeed, ask for help and advice from a breastfeeding clinic or postnatal care centre.

## Sun protection and shade are better than coconut oil

There is no convincing evidence that coconut oil, olive oil or other oil offer sufficient protection against UV radiation when sunbathing and spending time on the beach. Instead, make sure you protect yourself adequately the next time you go out in the sun – with shade, suitable clothing and sun protection factor.



The sun is good for us in many ways. We get warmth and vitamin D, which we do need, but 15 to 30 minutes of summertime sun is sufficient to produce sufficient vitamin D. Many people spend significantly longer than that in the sun and are at risk of sunburn. Avoid suffering sunburn, as it increases the risk of skin cancer.

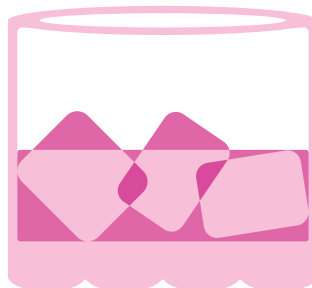
The best way of all of protecting yourself against the sun's harmful rays is to stay in the shade and wear suitable clothing. We recommend using products with a high sun protection factor when you stay out in the sun. It is a good idea to avoid staying in direct sunlight between 11 am and 3 pm, because that is when the sun's rays are at their strongest. As snow and water reflect sunlight, it is also important to be careful when you are out on a lake or on a skiing holiday.

## ***There is no evidence that white pepper and whisky cure gastroenteritis***

Many people have been advised to cure or prevent gastroenteritis by eating whole white peppercorns. This is probably inspired by the old saying “fight evil with evil”, but there is no scientific evidence that this household remedy works.

Others are advised to take a nip of an alcoholic beverage to cure food poisoning, but this does not work either. Instead, the alcohol takes energy away from the body.

If you want to avoid becoming ill, it is best to try to maintain good hygiene and wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water. If you have developed gastroenteritis, it is important to take in sufficient fluids and salt, for example with a fluid replacement available from Apoteket.



## No, toothpaste does not make pimples disappear

Pimples, or acne, can be a scourge. People used to be advised to rub toothpaste into their pimples to make them dry out and disappear. However, there is no evidence that this works, and it may even cause further irritation in the skin.

Acne or pimples are very common and completely harmless. They are due to inflamed sebaceous glands that are visible as a rash on the face, chest or back.

If you have developed acne, extra washing does not help, and you should use a face wash for greasy and pimply complexions instead, in the morning and in the evening.

If it causes you distress, you can also try an acne solution or acne gel containing aspirin, which has the effect that the sebaceous glands do not become blocked so easily.

There are also non-prescription medicines available at Apoteket that you can try if acne solution or acne gel does not help. If you have particularly great problems with acne, your doctor can prescribe medication for you.

## An alcoholic beverage won't stop your cold

A widely repeated myth about colds is that a small glass of whisky or other alcoholic beverage will stop or relieve the symptoms. The truth is that alcohol actually takes away the energy your body needs in order to become well.

You can get advice on how best to treat your cold at Apoteket. If you have thick nasal catarrh, you may need to clear your nose with a saline solution. You can mix one yourself, or buy a ready-to-use spray.



Alternatively, you can use a decongestant nasal spray which reduces the swelling in the mucous membranes and makes it easier for you to breathe. If you have a fever, you may need non-prescription medicines to bring down your temperature.

If you have a sore throat, it may also make you feel better if you have a hot or cold drink. There are also throat tablets that deaden the discomfort.

Colds usually go away by themselves, but they can sometimes lead to other conditions such as sinusitis or ear inflammation, which may need to be treated.

## No link between vaccines and autism

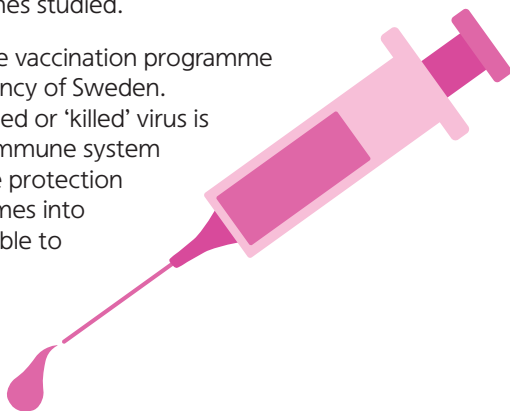
In 1998, a study was published showing that vaccination could lead to autism. This caused many people to start worrying about whether their children should be given MMR vaccinations (measles, mumps and rubella), fearing that they might develop other diseases.

However, the man behind the study, Andrew Wakefield, had not been honest and had changed the results in his research report, with the result that the publication was withdrawn. Since then, a host of published studies have proven that there is no link between autism and the vaccines studied.

Apoteket advises everyone to follow the vaccination programme recommended by the Public Health Agency of Sweden. When someone is vaccinated, a weakened or 'killed' virus is injected into the body. As a result, the immune system starts to form antibodies, which provide protection against the disease. The next time it comes into contact with the infection, the body is able to defend itself so that illness is prevented.

Most children do not react to vaccinations or show any side effects. If a reaction does occur, it most commonly takes the form of redness at the place where the injection was given, and there may also be a little swelling, heat or tenderness. Allergic reactions to vaccinations can occur but are very rare.

In Stockholm and Sundsvall it is also possible to be vaccinated at branches of Apoteket, for example against seasonal flu, the tick-borne disease TBE, shingles or diseases commonly encountered when travelling abroad.





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