

# Culture & Sensitivity Testing for Infections

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**Q.** Why are culture and sensitivities useful in treating infections?

**A.** A 'culture and sensitivity' is the name given to the laboratory testing of a sample to determine:

1. Exactly which organism (e.g., type of bacteria, yeast) is causing the problem.
2. The best medication to use to kill that organism.



That may not sound like much, but remember that 90% of the time, when your physician or veterinarian prescribes a medication for an infection, he or she probably knows the answer to neither question. Choosing an antibiotic without a culture and sensitivity is a hit-or-miss affair. With experience, many veterinarians can choose a medication that will work, but sometimes, they will 'miss,' and a culture and sensitivity is the only way to get the right treatment.