

## Self-care guide – Antibiotics not needed

### Why did you not get antibiotics today?

Colds and most coughs, sinusitis, otitis media, sore throats, ear and other infections often get better without antibiotics, as your body can fight these infections on its own.

The table below shows how long these illnesses normally last, what you can do to ease your symptoms and when you should go back to your GP or contact NHS services.

**Your local pharmacist can advise you and recommend medicines to help your symptoms.**

Your infection	Usually lasts	How to treat yourself better for these infections, now and next time
<input type="checkbox"/> Middle-ear infection	4 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have plenty of rest.</li> <li>• Drink enough fluids to avoid feeling thirsty.</li> <li>• Ask your local pharmacist to recommend medicines to help your symptoms or pain (or both).</li> <li>• Fever is a sign the body is fighting the infection and usually gets better by itself in most cases. You can use paracetamol (or ibuprofen) if you or your child are uncomfortable as a result of a fever.</li> <li>• Other things you can do suggested by GP or nurse: .....</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> Sore throat	7 days	
<input type="checkbox"/> Common cold	10 days	
<input type="checkbox"/> Sinusitis	18 days	
<input type="checkbox"/> Cough or bronchitis	21 days	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other infection: .....	..... days	

For more information visit NHS Choices website:

<http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/coldsandflu/Pages/Coldcomfort.aspx>

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When should you get help: Contact your GP practice or contact NHS 111
<p><b>1 to 8 are possible signs of serious illness and should be assessed urgently. Phone for advice if you are not sure how urgent the symptoms are.</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. If you develop a severe headache and are feeling sick or are vomiting.</li> <li>2. If your skin is very cold or has a strange colour, or you develop an unusual rash.</li> <li>3. If you feel confused or have slurred speech or are very drowsy.</li> <li>4. If you have difficulty breathing. Signs can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o breathing quickly</li> <li>o turning blue around the lips and the skin below the mouth</li> <li>o skin between or above the ribs getting sucked or pulled in with every breath.</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. If you develop chest pain.</li> <li>6. If you have difficulty swallowing or are drooling.</li> <li>7. If you cough up blood.</li> <li>8. If you are feeling a lot worse.</li> </ol> <p><b>Less serious signs that can usually wait until the next available GP appointment:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. If you are not improving by the time given in the 'Usually lasts' column.</li> <li>10. In children with middle-ear infection: if fluid is coming out their ears or if they have new deafness</li> </ol> <p>Other .....</p>

<p align="center"><b>Why you should only take antibiotics when they are needed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bacteria can adapt and find ways to survive the effects of an antibiotic. They become 'antibiotic resistant' so that the antibiotic no longer works.</li> <li>• The more we use antibiotics, the greater the chance that bacteria will become resistant to them so that they no longer work on our infections.</li> <li>• Antibiotic-resistant bacteria don't just infect you; they can spread to other people in close contact with you.</li> <li>• Antibiotics can cause side effects such as rashes, thrush, stomach pains diarrhoea, reactions to sunlight, being sick if you drink alcohol and other symptoms.</li> </ul> <p align="center"><b>Never share antibiotics and always return any unused antibiotics to a pharmacy for safe disposal</b></p>
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