

Self help guide to treating your infection

Patient's name Date

Self care advice Name of product(s) supplied Advised to contact GP practice for further advice

- The table below shows you how long illnesses normally last, what you can do to ease your symptoms and when you should go to your GP or contact NHS services.
- Colds and most coughs, sinusitis, otitis media, sore throats, ear and other infections often get better without antibiotics, as your body can usually fight these infections on its own.

Please tick	Illness	Usual length of illness	What you can do to ease the symptoms	When should you (or your child) go to your GP practice or contact, NHS 24
	Middle ear infection	4 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have plenty of rest. Drink enough fluids to avoid feeling thirsty. 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 is uncomfortable as a result of a fever. Other things you can do 	<p>When should you (or your child) go to your GP practice or contact, NHS 24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The first eight of these are potentially signs of serious illness and should be assessed urgently. Telephone for advice if you are uncertain about the urgency. Even if you attend your GP with symptoms after the usual length of illness, you might not need an antibiotic <ol style="list-style-type: none"> If you develop a severe headache and are vomiting. If your skin is very cold or has a strange colour, or you develop an unusual rash. If you feel confused or have slurred speech or are very drowsy. If you have difficulty breathing. Signs that suggest breathing problems can include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> breathing quickly turning blue around the lips and the skin below the mouth skin between or above the ribs getting sucked or pulled in with every breath. If you develop chest pain. If you have difficulty swallowing or are drooling. If you cough up blood. If you are feeling a lot worse. <p>Less serious signs that can usually wait until the next available GP appointment:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> If you are not improving by the time given in the 'Usual length of illness' column. Children with middle ear infection: if fluid coming out of their ears or new hearing problems. Other
	Sore throat	7 days		
	Common cold	10 days		
	Sinusitis	18 days		
	Cough or bronchitis	21 days		
	Other infection		

Why you should only take antibiotics when they are needed

- Bacteria can adapt and find ways to survive the effects of an antibiotic. They become 'antibiotic resistant' so that the antibiotic no longer works.
- The more we use antibiotics, the greater the chance that bacteria will become resistant to them so that they no longer work. If we all try to reduce their usage, antibiotics will be more likely to work when we **really** need them.
- Antibiotic-resistant bacteria don't just infect you; **they can spread to other people in close contact with you.**
- Some antibiotics can cause reactions such as: rashes, thrush, stomach pains, diarrhoea, or being sick if you drink alcohol and reactions to sunlight.

Always return any unused antibiotics to a pharmacy for safe destruction.