

# Is your cold, sore throat, earache or cough getting you down?



- 🕒 Sore throat
- 🕒 Blocked nose
- 🕒 Sinusitis
- 🕒 Runny nose
- 🕒 Earache
- 🕒 Tonsillitis
- 🕒 Cough
- 🕒 Cold and Flu

**A guide to understanding  
your symptoms**

# Understand your symptoms

Runny or blocked nose, sore throat, sinus pain, cough and earache are all symptoms of what is known as an upper respiratory tract (upper airway) infection

Upper respiratory tract infections include colds, flu, sinusitis, tonsillitis, pharyngitis, laryngitis and otitis media ('itis' means inflammation)



- Most upper respiratory tract infections are not serious and start to clear up within a few days or up to 2 weeks
- Your immune system is able to deal with this infection
- Most often, a virus causes the infection
- Antibiotics are not recommended for most upper respiratory tract infections

# "How long until I feel better?"

It is normal for upper respiratory tract infections to take a while to clear up

## Earache

Dull or burning pain inside the ear

Usually lasts  
4 days

## Sore throat

Throat feels sore or tender, difficulty swallowing

Lasts up to  
1 week

## Common cold

Runny or blocked nose, throat pain, cough, headache, feeling unwell

Usually lasts  
7-10 days

## Flu

Runny or blocked nose, throat pain, no energy, fever, general aches and pains

Lasts up to  
2 weeks

## Runny nose/nasal congestion

Build up of mucus causing a blocked nose or constant runny nose

Usually lasts  
1-2½ weeks

## Sinusitis

Pain and/or pressure in the nose, forehead, cheek area or behind the eyes

Usually lasts  
2-3 weeks

## Dry/tickly cough

Unproductive cough

Lasts up to  
3 weeks



Most symptoms are due to inflammation and mucus production as part of your body's natural immune response to fighting infection. In the meantime, you can start to feel better by treating the symptoms early

**Ask your pharmacist to advise you on the most appropriate product for symptom relief so you can get on with your life**

# “Do I need antibiotics?”

Antibiotics are generally not recommended for most upper respiratory tract infections

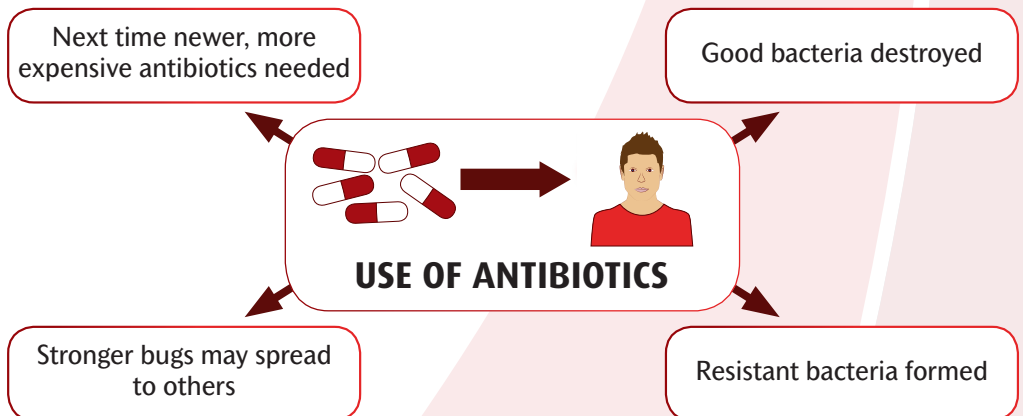
- Most upper respiratory tract infections are not serious and will clear up without antibiotic treatment
- Antibiotics don't work against viruses and it will take the same time to clear symptoms with or without antibiotics. Antibiotics won't make you feel better any faster
- Antibiotics may cause unpleasant side effects, such as diarrhoea, thrush or rash
- Taking antibiotics may disrupt the balance between good and bad bacteria in your gut, which is important for a healthy immune system

## Don't help bugs become superbugs

Superbugs develop as a result of using too many antibiotics, and cannot be killed by antibiotics in the future. This is known as antibiotic resistance


- Carrying resistant bacteria means antibiotics might not work for you when these bacteria start causing illness
- Resistance to antibiotics is a growing global problem and it will make treatment of infections much harder or even impossible in the future
- Your symptoms can be managed without an antibiotic

**Did you know? If you take an antibiotic, resistant bacteria develop in your body, which you carry for up to a year afterwards**





# Get the right relief for your symptoms



Upper respiratory tract infections affect everyone slightly differently. You need to take the right medicines for your specific symptoms and needs. Your pharmacist can help find the right treatment for you

## Relief is as easy as 1, 2, 3:

**1**

### **Assess your symptoms**

Help your pharmacist by providing a good and complete description of your symptoms and any concerns

**2**

### **Beat your symptoms**

Get the best medicines for your specific symptoms. Your pharmacist is best equipped to provide advice and appropriate symptom relief. Your pharmacist can also tell you when you should see a doctor

**3**

### **Care for yourself**

Drink plenty of fluids, get more rest and make sure you get medicines that suit you best – there are formulations available for everyone's preferences

# Sore throat management\*

Sore throat is an extremely common reason for people to see a pharmacist or doctor. In almost all cases, antibiotics won't relieve the pain or help you get better quicker. It is normal for sore throats to last for up to one week

## Relief is as easy as 1, 2, 3:

1

### Assess your symptoms

"My throat is really dry and painful and it's hard to swallow"

2

### Beat your symptoms

Your pharmacist is likely to tell you that your sore throat infection is not serious and the pain is due to a swollen/inflamed throat. They will recommend an anti-inflammatory medicine, such as a tablet, spray or lozenge, which meets your individual preferences. This will help relieve your pain and discomfort, and allow you to swallow more comfortably

3

### Care for yourself

Choose your relief to meet your needs. For example, you may prefer a lozenge or spray that contains pain-relieving and anti-inflammatory ingredients; the soothing effects are fast and can last for hours. Other things you can do that can help a sore throat include drinking plenty of fluids – some prefer tea, others cold drinks – and getting enough rest

If symptoms last longer than one week with no improvement, if they persist or you develop new symptoms contact your doctor for further advice

**Remember: Antibiotics won't relieve the symptoms of upper respiratory tract infections**

From the Global Respiratory Infection Partnership (GRIP), an international group of healthcare professionals committed to saving antibiotics for the future

 **GRIP**  
GLOBAL RESPIRATORY  
INFECTION PARTNERSHIP

\* Other upper respiratory tract symptoms can be managed in a similar way through the pharmacy and appropriate symptomatic relief