Managing your infection

A step-by-step guide on how to manage your infection

Self-care steps

Step 1: How to help make yourself better
Step 2: Check how long your symptoms last
Step 3: Look out for serious symptoms
Step 4: Where to get help

Developed with:

Public Health England
www.rcgp.org.uk/targetantibiotics

Endorsed by:

NHS SCOTLAND
GIG NHS SCOTLAND
British Infection Association
Royal Pharmaceutical Society

Professionals, including nurses, and service users were involved in the development of the leaflet.
Step 1: How to help make yourself better

Whatever your infection, you can do the following to help.

- Take paracetamol to reduce a fever. Always follow the instructions.
- Ask your pharmacist for advice on reducing your symptoms.
- Get plenty of rest until you feel better.
- Drink enough fluids to avoid feeling thirsty.
- Use tissues when you sneeze to help stop infections spreading.
- Wash your hands to help stop infections spreading.

For more information, visit the NHS Choices website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

Most common infections get better without antibiotics. Find out how you can make better use of antibiotics by visiting: [www.antibioticguardian.com](http://www.antibioticguardian.com)
**Step 2: Check how long your symptoms last**

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<th>Earache usually lasts 4 days</th>
<th>Sore throat usually lasts 7 days</th>
<th>A cold usually lasts 10 days</th>
<th>A cough usually lasts 21 days</th>
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If you are not starting to improve a little by the times given above, get advice from your GP practice.

If you are feeling a lot worse, phone **NHS 111, NHS Direct Wales** or **NHS 24** (see step 4).
Step 3: Look out for serious symptoms

If you have an infection and develop any of the symptoms below, you should be seen urgently by a doctor. Ring your GP practice or call NHS 111, NHS Direct Wales or NHS 24.

Severe headache  Very cold skin  Trouble breathing
Feeling confused  Chest pain
Problems swallowing  Coughing blood  Feeling a lot worse

Step 4: Where to get help

**Emergency**

If you have an emergency, call **999** immediately.