

# 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



TARGET  
[www.rcgp.org.uk/targetantibiotics](http://www.rcgp.org.uk/targetantibiotics)



e-Bug  
Operated by  
Public Health England  
[www.e-Bug.eu](http://www.e-Bug.eu)



Professionals, including nurses, and service users were involved in the development of the leaflet.

#### Endorsed by:



GIG Cymru  
NHS Wales  
Iechyd Cyhoeddus  
Cymru  
Public Health  
Wales



Royal College of  
General Practitioners



The British Society for  
Antimicrobial Chemotherapy



ROYAL  
PHARMACEUTICAL  
SOCIETY

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Royal College  
of Nursing



British Infection Association

# 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

### Earache



An earache:

Most get better by 8 days

Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

### Sore throat



A sore throat:

Most get better by 7-8 days

Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

### Cold



A cold:

Most get better by 14 days

Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

### Cough



A cough:

Most get better by 21 days

Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

If you are not starting to improve a little by the times given above, seek 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

**NHS England**



when it's less  
urgent than 999

**NHS Direct Wales**

**NHS Direct Wales**  
**0845 46 47**  
**Galw Iechyd Cymru**

**NHS Scotland**

**NHS**  
**24**  
Call us free on  
**111**

**N.Ireland**

Contact your  
GP practice

**HSC** Public Health  
Agency

## Emergency

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