

# DELAYED PRESCRIPTION

## Helping prevent the overuse of antibiotics

Most coughs and colds get better just as quickly without antibiotics. In fact, antibiotics often have no effect whatsoever.

Bacteria are becoming increasingly resistant to different antibiotics. If you take antibiotics when you don't need them, it allows bacteria to build up resistance. This means they are less likely to work in the future.

Help safeguard our antibiotics, only use them when you need them.

Date of appointment:

Delayed prescription to be collected after  days, but only if you do not feel better, or if you feel worse.

Collect from:  GP reception  GP or nurse  Pharmacy



## What is a delayed antibiotic prescription?

The difference to a normal prescription is that you should wait a few days before collecting your antibiotic, and if you are feeling better, you should not collect it at all.

## Why have I been given a delayed prescription?

We know that most coughs and colds get better just as quickly without antibiotics. This is because most are caused by viruses, and antibiotics do not work against viruses.

It's important that we only use antibiotics when we need them. This is because antibiotic resistance in bacteria is a growing concern. If we want antibiotics to work when we need them, we must stop using them when they are unnecessary.

## So why have I been given a prescription at all?

Although viruses are the most common cause of sore throats and coughs, on occasion they might be caused by bacteria. Your doctor or healthcare professional does not think your current symptoms need treating with antibiotics, but if your symptoms get worse, you may need them.

## How to treat your symptoms?

- Have plenty of rest;
- Drink enough fluids to avoid feeling thirsty;
- Ask your pharmacist to recommend medicines to help your symptoms and/or pain;
- 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;
- Use a tissue when you sneeze and wash your hands well to help prevent spread of your infection to your family, friends and others you meet;
- Other things you can do, suggested by GP or nurse:

## When should you get help?

The following points below are possible signs of serious illness and should be assessed urgently. Phone for advice if you are not sure how urgent the symptoms are.

1. If you develop a severe headache and/or are sick;
2. If your skin is very cold or has a strange colour or you develop a rash;
3. If you feel confused or have slurred speech or are very drowsy;
4. If you have difficulty breathing such as breathing quickly, turning blue or the skin between or above the ribs is sucked or pulled in with every breath,
5. If you develop chest pain;
6. If you have difficulty swallowing;
7. If you cough up blood;
8. If you are feeling a lot worse.

## Less serious signs

9. If you are not improving by the time given in the 'usually lasts' column on the back of this leaflet;
11. Other:

**Contact Your GP practice or phone NHS 111 for help and advice**



| Your Infection                           | Usually lasts             |
|--|---------------------------|
| Middle-ear infection                     | 4 days                    |
| Sore throat                              | 7 days                    |
| Common cold                              | 10 days                   |
| Sinusitis                                | 18 days                   |
| Cough or bronchitis                      | 3-6 weeks                 |
| Other infection:<br><input type="text"/> | <input type="text"/> days |

## Useful contacts

You can find out more about a variety of illnesses and conditions, including the main symptoms and when to seek help, on the NHS Choices website: [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)

If you feel you need medical attention but are not sure, call the 24 hour, 7 day a week helpline NHS 111

If you have any comments about the contents of this leaflet, please contact:

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