# Treating your infection

Your GP recommends that you self-care, here is information to help you do this.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your infection</th>
<th>Usually lasts</th>
<th>How to treat yourself better for these infections, now and next time</th>
<th>When should you get help:</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| Middle-ear infection    | 4 days        | • Have plenty of rest  
                          • Drink enough fluids to avoid feeling thirsty  
                          • Ask your pharmacists to recommend medicines to help your symptoms and pain  
                          • Fever is a sign the body is fighting the infections and usually gets better by itself. You can use paracetamol or ibuprofen if you are uncomfortable as a result of a fever  
                          • Use a tissue and wash your hands well to help prevent spreading your infection to others  
                          • Other things you can do suggested by your GP are:  
                          | Contact your GP on:          
                          After hours: | The following are possible signs of serious illness and should be assessed urgently. Phone for advice if you are not sure how urgent the symptoms are:  
                          • If you develop a severe headache and start to vomit  
                          • If your skin is very cold or you develop an unusual rash  
                          • If you feel confused or have slurred speech or are very drowsy  
                          • If you have difficulty breathing, with signs such as:  
                            ○ Breathing very quickly  
                            ○ Turning blue around the lips  
                            ○ 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  
                          |                                                                 | Less serious sign that can usually wait until the next available GP appointment:  
                          • If you are not improving by the time given in the ‘Usually lasts’ column  
                          • In children with middle-ear infections: if fluid is coming out of their ears or if they have new deafness  
                          • Other                                                                 |
| Sore throat             | 7 days        |                                                                 |                                                                 |
| Common cold             | 10 days       |                                                                 |                                                                 |
| Sinusitis               | 18 days       |                                                                 |                                                                 |
| Cough or bronchitis     | 3 weeks       |                                                                 |                                                                 |
| Other infection         | ...... days    |                                                                 |                                                                 |

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The prescription can be used after □ days only if you feel worse.

- Colds, most coughs, sinusitis, ear infections and sore throats, and other infections often get better without antibiotics, as your body can fight these infections on its own.
- If you take antibiotics when you don’t need them, it allows bacteria to build resistance. This means, they’re less likely to work in the future, when you really might need them.
- Antibiotics can cause side effects such as rashes, thrush, stomach pains, diarrhoea, reactions to sunlight and other symptoms.

Never share antibiotics and always return any unused antibiotics to a pharmacy for safe disposal.