

TARGET Managing your common infection (self-care) leaflet User Guide

Summary

The Managing Your Common Infection (self-care) leaflet can be used as a tool for the public and communities to increase awareness and change behaviour around antibiotic use by increasing individuals' confidence and knowledge on how to self-care for their own infections and subsequently reducing inappropriate antibiotic use.

What are the aims of the *Managing Your Common Infection* leaflet?

The leaflet aims to give information, in line with NICE 63 guidance on:

- Increase awareness and change behaviour around hygiene, self-care and subsequently antibiotic use
- The natural course of self-limiting infections
- How people can self-care
- Explicit advice on when to seek medical help
- Simple advice to wash their hands to reduce the spread of infection

The leaflet follows behavioural steps which help the reader to make decisions on how to manage their own infection. The behavioural steps are:

1. What are the symptoms of a common infection?
2. How common is my infection?
3. How can I treat a common infection?
4. How long could my infection last?
5. Will my infection need antibiotics to get better?
6. How can I stop my infection from spreading?
7. What symptoms of serious illness should I look out for?
8. What if I suspect sepsis?

1 What are the symptoms of a common infection?

Eyes

- Red eyes
- Sticky eyes
- Eyes burn or feel gritty

Chest

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing up green or yellow mucus

Ears, nose and throat

- Pain or soreness
- Blocked or runny nose
- Swollen tonsils

Gut

- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea

2 How common is my infection?

Every year in the UK...

- adults have 2 to 3 colds, on average (more common in children)
- 1 in 5 people have a gut infection
- 1 in 10 people have a sinus infection

3 How can I treat a common infection?

5 Will my infection need antibiotics to get better?

6 How can I stop my infection from spreading?

7 What symptoms of serious illness should I look out for?

- Severe headache and vomiting
- Breathing faster or slower than usual, chest pain or tightness
- Ongoing fever or chills (temperature above 38°C or less than 36°C)
- Kidney pain in your back just under your ribs
- Problems swallowing
- New very fast or slow pulse
- Coughing blood
- Very cold skin

8 What if I suspect signs of sepsis?

Sepsis is a life-threatening reaction to an infection. Possible signs are:

- slurred speech, confusion or drowsiness
- extreme shivering
- passing no urine in a day
- severe breathlessness
- it feels like you're going to die, and
- skin blotchy or discoloured

If you suspect sepsis: Call 999 immediately

When to use the *Managing Your Common Infection* leaflet?

The leaflet can be used in a variety of situations and settings including in:-

- Community pharmacy to educate patients about self-care for common infections
- Consultations to share with patients
- GP surgery waiting rooms
- Community groups

Why create the *Managing Your Common Infection* leaflet?

TARGET currently have leaflets for respiratory tract and urinary tract infections. In some cases, such as in community pharmacy, healthcare professionals may not know what type of infection a patient has, and therefore this leaflet can provide general advice covering common infections in general. This leaflet aims to empower patients to manage symptoms of common infections through simple self-care actions and provide safety netting information including serious signs of illness to look out for and where to seek urgent help.

We are happy to receive feedback about how you have used this leaflet and any constructive comments on how it can be improved. Please contact us at TARGETantibiotics@ukhsa.gov.uk.