

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.

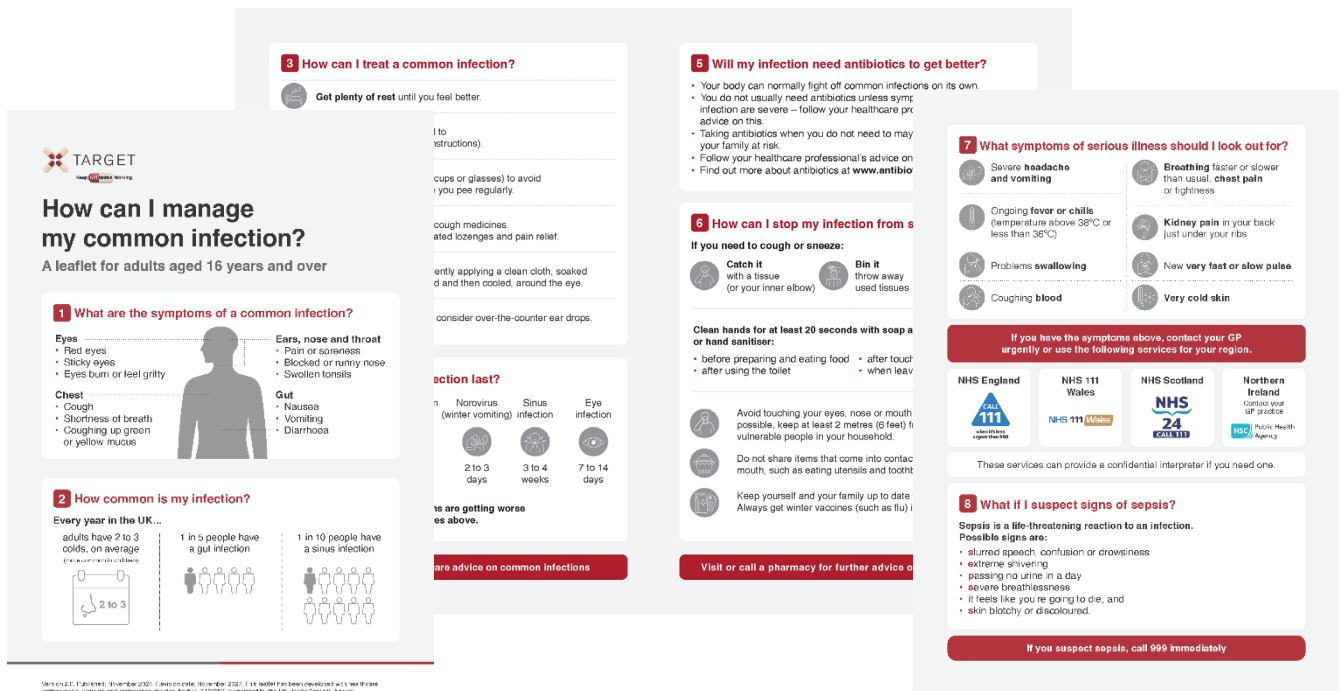
What are the aims of the Managing Your Common Infection leaflet?

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?



3 How can I treat a common infection?
Get plenty of rest until you feel better.

5 Will my infection need antibiotics to get better?
Your body can normally fight off common infections on its own. You do not usually need antibiotics unless symptoms are severe – follow your healthcare professional's advice on this. Taking antibiotics when you do not need to may harm your family at risk. Follow your healthcare professional's advice on when to take antibiotics. Find out more about antibiotics at www.antibiotics.org.uk

6 How can I stop my infection from spreading?
If you need to cough or sneeze:
Catch it with a tissue (or your inner elbow) Bin it throw away used tissues

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:
• altered 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.

To use this leaflet properly, it is important that it is used as a tool to interact with patients, rather than as a 'parting gift'. In order to do this effectively you should be familiar with its content.

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.

Accessibility

This leaflet has been awarded with a Crystal Mark for use of plain English. This accredits the leaflet as suitable for a range of users to understand, including younger audiences and those with learning difficulties – visit the [Plain English Campaign](#) website for more information.



The HTML webpage versions of the leaflet complies with [Web Content Accessibility Guidelines \(WCAG\) 2.2](#) to ensure that the content can be accessed by a wider range of people with disabilities, including those with vision, hearing, speech and movement deficiencies, photosensitivity, learning disabilities and cognitive limitations, and combinations of these. These guidelines apply to the leaflet accessed via desktops, laptops, tablets, and mobile devices.

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.