

TARGET Treating Your Respiratory Tract Infection (RTI) Leaflet User Guide

Summary

Patient leaflets outlining the natural history of respiratory tract infections and information about when to re-consult can result in reduced antibiotic prescribing. The TARGET *Treating Your Respiratory Tract Infection (RTI) Leaflet* was developed as a tool to share with patients in the consultation to educate them about using antibiotics responsibly.

What are the aims of the *Treating Your RTI Leaflet*?

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

- The natural course of self-limiting infections
- How people can self-care
- Explicit advice on when to seek medical help
- Appropriate antibiotic use and the side effects of antibiotic

Overview of the leaflet

Natural course of RTIs
Use this section to provide a simple explanation of why antibiotics were not prescribed. The table provides tick boxes to use to explain to the patient what illness they are currently suffering from and how long their illness is likely to last (based on NICE evidence). The 'other infection' can be used to note any illnesses that are not included on the leaflet.


Self-care advice
To be explained to the patient to provide advice on how to manage their current infection and prevent future infections.

Prescribing decision
To be completed by the prescriber in order to personalise the leaflet for each patient.

When to get help
To be explained to the patient to provide safety-netting advice on what urgent signs and symptoms to look out for and what actions to take if these present.

Why should you only take antibiotics as prescribed?
Provides information to patients regarding the importance of appropriate and responsible antibiotic use. This can be explained during the consultation or referred to for the patient to read once the consultation is complete.

**Treating your
Respiratory tract infection (RTI)**



Your infection

Middle-ear infection
 Sore throat
 Sinusitis
 Common cold
 Cough or bronchitis
 Other infection _____

Most are better by

7 to 8 days
7 to 8 days
14 to 21 days
14 days
3 to 4 weeks
_____ days

When to get help

If any of the below apply to you or your child, get an urgent assessment from a healthcare professional. If your child is under the age of 5, go to A&E immediately or call 999.

- Your skin is very cold or has a strange colour, or you develop an unusual rash.
- You have new feelings of confusion or drowsiness or have slurred speech.
- You have difficulty breathing. Signs that suggest breathing problems include:
 - breathing quickly
 - turning blue around the lips and the skin below the mouth, and
 - skin between or above the ribs getting sucked or pulled in with every breath.

Less serious signs that can usually wait until you visit a pharmacist or your next available GP appointment

- You are not starting to improve a little by the time given in the 'Most are better by' column in the table above.
- You have mild side effects such as diarrhoea. Get advice from a healthcare professional if you are concerned.

How to look after yourself and your family

- Have plenty of rest.
- Drink enough fluids to avoid feeling thirsty.
- Ask your local pharmacist to recommend medicines to help reduce your symptoms or pain (or both).
- Fever is a sign your body is fighting the infection. It usually gets better by itself in most cases. You can use paracetamol if you (or your child) are uncomfortable because of a fever.
- Use a tissue to cover coughs and sneezes and wash your hands with soap to help prevent spreading infection to your family, friends and other people.

Never share antibiotics and always return any unused antibiotics to a pharmacy for them to dispose of safely.

Back-up antibiotic collection

Back-up antibiotic prescription to be collected after _____ days from ____ / ____ / ____ only if you are not starting to feel a little better or you feel worse.

- Colds, most coughs, sinusitis, ear infections, sore throats and other infections often get better without antibiotics, as your body can usually fight these infections on its own.

If you need antibiotics, take them exactly as prescribed. Never save them for later and do not share them with others. For more information, visit www.antibioticguardian.com.

Why it is important to take antibiotics as prescribed

Taking any antibiotics makes bacteria that live inside your body more resistant. This means that antibiotics may not work when you really need them.

Antibiotics can cause side effects such as rashes, thrush, stomach pains, diarrhoea, reactions to sunlight, other symptoms, or being sick if you drink alcohol with the antibiotic metronidazole.

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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.

Why create the *Treating Your RTI Leaflet*?

Prescribers often feel caught between pressure of not to prescribe antibiotics and expectations from patients to prescribe. However, there is evidence that prescribers often overestimate patients' expectations for antibiotics, and that many patients, when they are fully informed about the modest benefits and potential harms from treatment, would rather not receive antibiotics. 70-80% of all antibiotics are prescribed in the community, therefore sharing leaflets with patients presenting with RTI's significantly reduces inappropriate use of antibiotics.

Accessibility

This leaflet has been awarded with a Crystal Mark for use of plain English. The Crystal Mark is a seal of approval for the clarity of a document from the [Plain English Campaign](#).



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.

NICE alignment

The TARGET *Treating Your RTI Leaflet* specifically relates to the following NICE guidelines:

- [NG15 Antimicrobial stewardship: systems and processes for effective antimicrobial medicine use](#): 1.1.31, 1.1.33, 1.1.34
- [NG63 Antimicrobial stewardship: changing risk-related behaviours in the general population](#): 1.3.2, 1.5.5 and 1.5.6

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.