



TARGET

Keep Antibiotics Working

# TARGET Respiratory Tract Infection (RTI) Pictorial Leaflet A step-by-step guide on how to manage your infection User Guide

Sharing of leaflets with patients presenting with respiratory tract infections significantly reduce inappropriate antibiotic prescribing. The *Respiratory Tract Infection (RTI) Pictorial 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 RTI Pictorial Leaflet?

The leaflet aims to give easy and accessible information to patients, 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 when to seek medical help
- Simple advice to wash their hands to reduce the spread of infection

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

1. How to help make yourself better
2. Check how long your symptoms last
3. Look out for serious symptoms
4. Where to get help

**1 Help yourself to feel better**  
Whatever your infection, you can do the following to help.

- Take paracetamol to reduce pain. Always follow the instructions on the packaging.
- Ask your pharmacist for advice on reducing your symptoms.

**2 Check how long your symptoms last**

- Earache: Most get better by 7 to 8 days.

**3 Look out for serious symptoms**  
If you have an infection and develop any of the symptoms below, you should see a doctor urgently. Ring your GP practice or call NHS 111 or NHS 24.

- Severe headache
- Very cold skin
- Trouble breathing
- Feeling confused
- Chest pain
- Problems swallowing
- Coughing blood
- Feeling a lot worse

**4 Where to get help**

- NHS England (111)
- NHS 111 Wales
- NHS Scotland (NHS 24)
- Northern Ireland (Public Health Agency)

If you have an emergency, call 999 immediately.

**Respiratory tract infections (RTIs)**  
A step-by-step guide on how to manage your infection

**What is an RTI?**  
A respiratory tract infection (RTI) occurs in the upper or lower respiratory tract, causing symptoms. A RTI is usually caused by a virus, but can sometimes be bacterial.

**What are some common symptoms of an RTI?**

- Nasal cavity**
  - Blocked or runny nose
- Sinuses**
  - Pain
  - Swelling
- Lungs**
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath
  - Coughing up mucus
- Ears**
  - Earache
- Throat**
  - Sore throat
  - Swollen tonsils

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### When to use the *RTI Pictorial Leaflet*?

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

- Consultations to share with patients
- GP surgery waiting rooms
- Community groups in antibiotic related activities

### Why create the *RTI Pictorial Leaflet*?

70% of antibiotics are prescribed in the community and more than 50% are unnecessary. Therefore sharing leaflets with patients presenting with RTI's significantly reduces their inappropriate use of antibiotics.

Community groups, including adults with learning difficulties, can find the current self-care leaflets overwhelming due to the amount of text. The Primary Care Unit at UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) have therefore developed a pictorial leaflet based on the TARGET *Treating Your Respiratory Tract Infection (RTI) Leaflet*. The leaflet is pictorial based and uses plain English so that it is suitable for a range of patient groups.

### 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.

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 the TARGET team via email at [TARGETantibiotics@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:TARGETantibiotics@ukhsa.gov.uk)