



How can I manage my common infection?

A leaflet for adults aged 16 years and over

1. What are the symptoms of a common infection?

1 Eyes

- Sticky eyes

2 Ears, nose and throat

- Pain or soreness
- Runny nose
- Swollen tonsils

3 Chest

- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Green or yellow mucus

4 Gut

- Vomiting
- Diarrhoea

5 Skin

- Infected blisters
- Redness or swelling around a wound
- Athlete's foot (an itchy rash between the toes)

6 Genital and urinary

- Pain on passing urine
- Passing urine more often at night
- Cloudy urine
- Discharge
- Pain in lower tummy

2. What if I think I have coronavirus (Covid-19)?

Common symptoms of Covid-19 to look out for are:

- a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste
- a high temperature, and
- a new, continuous cough.

For more advice about Covid-19 visit www.gov.uk/coronavirus or call your regional medical helpline (see back of leaflet).



Get plenty of rest until you feel better.



Take pain relief if you need to (make sure you follow the instructions).



Drink plenty of fluids (6 to 8 drinks, or 2 litres) so that you pass pale-coloured urine regularly.



For coughs, try honey and cough medicines.
For sore throats, try medicated lozenges and pain relief.



Soothe eye infections with a clean warm or cold damp flannel.



For an outer ear infection, apply local heat (such as a warm flannel).

4. How long could my infection last?

Cough



21 days

Sore throat
orearache



7 to 8 days

Common
cold



14 days

Norovirus
(winter
vomiting)



2 to 3 days

Sinus
infection



14 to 21 days

Contact your GP if your symptoms are getting worse or if you are not better by the times above.

- › Your **body can normally fight off** common infections on its own.
- › You do not usually need antibiotics, unless symptoms of a **bacterial** infection (such as a urine infection) are severe – a healthcare professional can advise you on this.
- › Taking antibiotics when you do not need to puts you and your family at risk.
- › Follow your **healthcare professional’s advice on antibiotics**.



Find out more about antibiotics at www.antibioticguardian.com

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



kill it
Clean your
hands

Clean hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or hand sanitiser:

- ✔ before preparing and eating food
- ✔ after touching pets or animals
- ✔ after using the toilet
- ✔ when leaving and arriving home



Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands.
If possible, keep your distance from others (2 meters or 6 feet), especially vulnerable people in your household.



Do not share items that come into contact with your mouth, such as eating utensils and toothbrushes.



Keep yourself and your family **up to date with vaccinations**. Always get **winter vaccines** (such as flu) if you are eligible.

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



Severe headache and vomiting



Ongoing **fever or chills** (temperature above 38°C or less than 36°C)



Problems **swallowing**
Turning blue around the mouth



Coughing **blood**



Breathing faster or slower than usual



Kidney pain in your back just under your ribs



Chest pain or tightness
New **very fast or slow pulse**



Visible **blood** in urine
Severe pain on passing urine, or passing more urine at night
Cloudy urine not improving in 1 to 2 days with fluids

If

you have the symptoms above, contact your GP urgently or use the

NHS England



When it's less urgent than 999

www.111.nhs.uk

NHS Direct Wales



www.111.wales.nhs.uk

NHS Scotland



www.nhs24.scot

Northern Ireland



Public Health Agency

Project supported by the PHA

Contact your GP practice

These services can provide a confidential interpreter if you need one.

8. What if I suspect signs of sepsis?

- **s**lurred speech, confusion or drowsiness
- **e**xtrême shivering
- **p**assing no urine in a day
- **s**evere breathlessness
- it feels like you're going to die, and

Call 999 immediately if you or others have signs of sepsis

