



RESPONSIBLE MANAGEMENT OF RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS (RTIs)

CASE STUDIES



CASE STUDY 1: MEET PRIYA

PRIYA HAS VISITED HER LOCAL PHARMACY COMPLAINING OF A SORE THROAT

“My throat is so scratchy... I can’t talk and it hurts to swallow. I just want it to go away... I’ve had enough”



CASE DETAILS

AGE: 27 years

BACKGROUND: Works as a public relations executive, which requires her to be talking to her team/clients all day

SYMPTOMS: Sore, scratchy and painful throat for 3 days, with an unproductive, dry cough

IMPACT: Symptoms are affecting her speech and ability to swallow, and she is feeling unwell at work

OTHER CONCERNS: She would like some analgesics and thinks antibiotics are the best option to stop her from passing symptoms on to others

HEALTH STATUS: Otherwise healthy

OTHER MEDICATIONS: Antihistamines for seasonal allergies

SEE HOW 1,2,3 CAN BE USED TO HELP PRIYA

1 ADDRESS PATIENT'S CONCERNS

- Identify the main symptoms, their duration and impact
- Ask about treatments taken so far



The pharmacist sympathises with Priya and acknowledges her frustrations

It sounds really frustrating... tell me what symptoms bother you most, and how long you've been having them, and we can work out what to do"



Priya confirms that her throat has been sore and scratchy for the past 3 days and she has been drinking hot lemon drinks to soothe her throat

"What bothers me most is the scratchy pain, which gets worse when I try to talk or swallow"

2 BE VIGILANT - ASSESS SEVERITY

- Identify risk factors and co-morbidities
- Ask about red flag symptoms
- Determine whether a referral is needed and address any objections



The pharmacist tells Priya that her sore throat sounds painful and will likely benefit from symptomatic relief. Some more details on her health are requested to understand what treatment would be best for her

"Although it's really frustrating, most sore throats clear up by themselves in less than 1 week"



Priya confirms that she doesn't have any other health issues and is not taking any medications except antihistamines. She doesn't have any worrying symptoms, but is concerned that she ought to get antibiotics

"I've had antibiotics for my sore throat in the past"



The pharmacist explains to Priya that it is unlikely she will benefit from antibiotics as they don't act on the painful symptoms, but there are some treatments that can provide relief for her pain and difficulty swallowing

"Sore throats are almost always caused by viruses, so antibiotics won't work. There are treatments that can rapidly address the sore throat pain and difficulty swallowing"

3 COUNSEL ON EFFECTIVE SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Determine what the patient needs from symptomatic relief
- Recommend appropriate symptomatic relief products, taking into account individual preferences
- Advise on when a doctor's visit might be needed



The pharmacist asks Priya about what sort of treatment she might prefer. Priya would ideally like something that acts rapidly, that can help her when she needs to talk, and that will relieve her pain and difficulty swallowing

"I want something that acts fast, and I need to be able to talk and swallow without pain"

The pharmacist recommends anti-inflammatory lozenges to quickly relieve the pain and for help with swallowing. Priya also decides that she will use an anti-inflammatory spray for extra relief when needed

Before completing the consultation, the pharmacist reminds Priya to look out for any red flag symptoms and advises her what to do next



"If you get any of those worrying symptoms we discussed, or if you're still feeling unwell after 1 week, you might need to visit your doctor, or you can always come back here for some more advice"

CASE STUDY 2: MEET JOHN

JOHN HAS COME INTO THE PHARMACY AFTER CONSULTING HIS DOCTOR ABOUT HIS SORE THROAT

“My throat is really painful... I hope the antibiotics work quickly”



CASE DETAILS

AGE: 40 years

BACKGROUND: Works as surveyor, which involves physical exertion and talking with clients

SYMPTOMS: Sore, painful throat for 2 days

IMPACT: Throat is painful and irritable. He feels as though there is a lump in his throat, which is making it difficult to talk

OTHER CONCERNS: He has been to his doctor and has a prescription for a course of antibiotics

HEALTH STATUS: Otherwise generally healthy

OTHER MEDICATIONS: Receiving treatment for hypertension

SEE HOW 1,2,3 CAN BE USED TO HELP JOHN

1 ADDRESS PATIENT'S CONCERNS

- Identify the main symptoms, their duration and impact
- Ask about treatments taken so far



John explains to the pharmacist that he has a prescription for a course of antibiotics to relieve his sore throat

"I need these to work quickly so that I can avoid taking any time off for my sore throat"



The pharmacist asks John about his symptoms, in particular how long he has had them and how they are impacting his activities

"Would you mind telling me a bit more about your sore throat, and how long it's been affecting you?"

John confirms that he has had a sore, painful throat for 2 days, which is making it difficult to talk

2 BE VIGILANT - ASSESS SEVERITY

- Identify risk factors and co-morbidities
- Ask about red flag symptoms
- Determine whether a referral is needed and address any objections



The pharmacist sympathises with John, and explains that she would like to get a couple of details on his general health and any other medications

"It sounds like your throat symptoms are really frustrating... can I quickly check whether you have any other health issues then we can get you some symptomatic relief"



John says that he has high blood pressure, which is controlled by medication. He is keen to get his antibiotics as he thinks these will relieve his symptoms

"I think the antibiotics will help me feel better"



The pharmacist explains that the antibiotics don't act on the painful symptoms of sore throat and will take a few days to work, so he also may benefit from having an over-the-counter treatment to provide rapid relief. She also makes John aware that most sore throats do not respond to antibiotics as they are caused by viruses

"Unlike antibiotics, there are treatments that can quickly relieve the pain. Although the doctor has prescribed antibiotics on this occasion, be aware for the future that sore throats are usually caused by viruses, which don't respond to antibiotics"

3 COUNSEL ON EFFECTIVE SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Determine what the patient needs from symptomatic relief
- Recommend appropriate symptomatic relief products, taking into account individual preferences
- Advise on when a doctor's visit might be needed



John agrees to getting some symptomatic treatment as well as his antibiotics, and says he would like something fast-acting for pain relief

"I would like some pain relief, and ideally something that can help me keep talking"



The pharmacist recommends an anti-inflammatory spray to quickly relieve the pain and inflammation so his throat will feel less swollen. She also asks John to look out for any red flag symptoms, or his sore throat getting worse, and provides reassurance on the likely duration of his symptoms

"Most sore throats last for less than 1 week; you may need to go back to your doctor if yours is still bothering you at that point. Remember to take the whole course of antibiotics. For the future, bear in mind that antibiotics don't generally work for sore throats, but the pharmacy has options to relieve symptoms"

CASE STUDY 3: MEET MARIA

MARIA HAS COME TO THE CLINIC TO ASK HER DOCTOR ABOUT HER SORE THROAT

“My sore throat just won’t go, and now I feel like I’m finding it difficult to breathe”



CASE DETAILS

AGE: 35 years

BACKGROUND: Works as a director of an international charity, which involves regular travel

SYMPTOMS: Sore, painful throat for 9 days with swollen, inflamed glands, a high temperature and wheezing

IMPACT: Throat is painful and sore, making swallowing difficult. She has started wheezing and is having night sweats due to her high temperature

HEALTH STATUS: Otherwise generally healthy

OTHER MEDICATIONS: Receiving levothyroxine for hypothyroidism

SEE HOW 1,2,3 CAN BE USED TO HELP MARIA

1

ADDRESS PATIENT'S CONCERNS

- Identify the main symptoms, their duration and impact
- Ask about treatments taken so far



Maria tells her doctor that she has been suffering from a sore, painful throat for 9 days. In the past 2-3 days, she has noticed other symptoms, including her glands becoming swollen, a high temperature and wheezing

"I wouldn't usually come to the doctor for a sore throat, but it's been getting worse. I can hardly swallow and I've started waking up at night because I'm so hot and sweaty"



The doctor expresses her concern for Maria's symptoms, particularly that her sore throat has lasted for more than 1 week and is getting worse

"It does sound like your sore throat isn't getting better on its own; have you been taking anything to help you feel better?"

Maria confirms that she has been taking over-the-counter pain relief and has been using medicated lozenges recommended by her pharmacist

2

BE VIGILANT - ASSESS SEVERITY

- Identify risk factors and co-morbidities
- Ask about red flag symptoms
- Determine whether a referral is needed and address any objections



The doctor checks through Maria's medical history to look for any important co-morbidities and prescription medications she is taking. She does a physical examination and takes her temperature, listens to her breathing and asks about red flag symptoms

"I just need to get a full picture of your symptoms and then we can decide on the best treatment options"



Maria describes her symptoms in more detail, and explains that she is also feeling very lethargic, due to her high temperature

"I feel exhausted; I'm not sleeping properly at night, and I'm tired all day"

The doctor sympathises with Maria and tells her that most sore throats are caused by viral infections and clear up in less than 1 week. As her throat has been bothering her for more than 1 week and she now has some more serious symptoms (high temperature, swollen glands, wheezing), the doctor thinks she may benefit from antibiotics on this occasion

3

COUNSEL ON EFFECTIVE SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Determine what the patient needs from symptomatic relief
- Recommend appropriate symptomatic relief products, taking into account individual preferences
- Advise on when a doctor's visit might be needed



The doctor gives Maria a prescription for a course of antibiotics and advises her to try an anti-inflammatory lozenge or spray containing flurbiprofen before sleeping, as antibiotics won't provide pain relief for her sore throat

"Make sure you take the full course of antibiotics. You will benefit from symptomatic relief from the pharmacist while the antibiotics get to work"



Maria thanks the doctor and agrees that she will get some anti-inflammatory lozenges to ease the pain of her sore throat, while completing her antibiotic course

"Thank you doctor, I will speak with the pharmacist about those lozenges and spray as my throat feels swollen and inflamed"

The doctor ends the consultation by asking Maria to keep an eye on her symptoms and come back for another appointment if things don't improve within the next few days

CASE STUDY 4: MEET FRANK

FRANK HAS COME TO THE CLINIC WITH A COLD AND A SORE THROAT

“I need some relief for my cold... and my throat is really sore”



CASE DETAILS

AGE: 31 years

BACKGROUND: Works as a financial advisor

SYMPTOMS: Runny nose, headache and sore throat for 3 days

IMPACT: Runny nose is making breathing difficult and throat is painful and sore. He is also having trouble sleeping

HEALTH STATUS: Otherwise generally healthy

OTHER MEDICATIONS: None

SEE HOW 1,2,3 CAN BE USED TO HELP FRANK

1 ADDRESS PATIENT'S CONCERNS

- Identify the main symptoms, their duration and impact
- Ask about treatments taken so far



Frank has come to the doctor with a sore throat, a runny nose and a headache. He's looking for some quick relief to help him get back to work

"I've had a bad throat for a few days, and now it feels like it's turning into a proper cold"



The doctor sympathises with Frank. He asks how long Frank has been having symptoms and what has been bothering him most

"That sounds really irritating. What do you think is your worst symptom, and how long has it been affecting you?"

Frank feels that his sore throat is affecting him most, noting that it's been painful and sore for about 3 days

2 BE VIGILANT - ASSESS SEVERITY

- Identify risk factors and co-morbidities
- Ask about red flag symptoms
- Determine whether a referral is needed and address any objections



The doctor asks Frank for a few more details to help him advise on a course of action. He does a physical examination, listens to his breathing and checks his medical history

"There are a few over-the-counter treatments that could help your throat... can I get some more details and then we can look at the different options?"



Frank describes his symptoms in more detail, and confirms that he's not taking any other medications

"I'm generally healthy, so I'm not worried; I just want something to make me feel better quickly as I have a work trip coming up"



The doctor tells Frank that most sore throats and colds get better by themselves in less than 1 week. As they are usually caused by viruses, antibiotics don't work and symptomatic relief is the best option

"Your symptoms should get better by themselves in the next few days. The pharmacist can usually provide options for quick relief"

3 COUNSEL ON EFFECTIVE SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Determine what the patient needs from symptomatic relief
- Recommend appropriate symptomatic relief products, taking into account individual preferences
- Advise on when a doctor's visit might be needed



The doctor asks Frank what sort of symptom relief he is looking for, so he can recommend some options

"It sounds like pain relief for your sore throat is a priority; what other symptom relief would be helpful?"



Frank agrees that pain relief is a priority, for both his sore throat and headache. He'd like something that can act rapidly

"The main problem is my throat pain as it's affecting my daily activities and my sleep"

The doctor recommends talking to the pharmacist about an anti-inflammatory spray or lozenge that will get to work quickly to relieve his throat pain. He also suggests over-the-counter pain relief options. To close the consultation, the doctor asks him to look out for any symptoms getting worse, and recommends he comes back if he doesn't start to feel better soon





GLOBAL RESPIRATORY
INFECTION PARTNERSHIP

**RESPONSIBILITY
TREATS BEST**

STOP ANTIBIOTIC OVERUSE

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