

## DID YOU KNOW?

The immune system is able to cope with respiratory infections in otherwise healthy people

## DID YOU KNOW?

Most people with a cold, sore throat, earache, or cough don't need antibiotics to recover

## DID YOU KNOW?

Antibiotics won't make you feel better sooner. If we use antibiotics appropriately we can prevent antibiotic resistance - YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

**ANTIBIOTICS ONLY KILL BACTERIA**  
MOST UPPER RESPIRATORY TRACT INFECTIONS (URTIs) ARE CAUSED BY VIRUSES<sup>1-6</sup>



**ANTIBIOTICS ARE NOT PAIN RELIEVERS**



**ANTIBIOTICS CAN CAUSE SIDE EFFECTS<sup>7,8</sup>**  
SUCH AS DIARRHOEA, THRUSH OR A RASH



ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE

WHEN YOU TAKE ANTIBIOTICS, BACTERIA IN YOUR BODY CAN BECOME **RESISTANT** TO THE ANTIBIOTIC<sup>9,10</sup>



RESISTANT BACTERIA CAN REMAIN IN YOUR BODY FOR UP TO **1 YEAR** AND **SPREAD** TO OTHER PEOPLE<sup>11,12</sup>



INFECTIONS CAUSED BY ANTIBIOTIC-RESISTANT BACTERIA ARE **HARDER TO TREAT<sup>10</sup>**

## HOW LONG WILL YOUR SYMPTOMS LAST?<sup>7,13-20</sup>



## WHAT KIND OF ADVICE WOULD YOU LIKE?

- ✓ Pain relief
- ✓ Reassurance
- ✓ Information on duration

## DIFFERENT PRODUCTS ARE AVAILABLE FOR SYMPTOM RELIEF - WHAT KIND OF PRODUCT DO YOU PREFER?



Soluble medicine



Drops



Syrups



Gargles



Lozenges



Tablets



Sprays

"If symptoms last longer than we discussed, do not improve or you develop new symptoms, come back and see me"



### REFERENCES

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## MYTH

Patients consulting for URTIs always want an antibiotic<sup>1,2</sup>

## FACT

Most patients seek information on the cause, prognosis and duration of symptoms, and pain relief<sup>1,2</sup>

# Use the 1,2,3 APPROACH

when talking to patients about URTI

### 1

## ADDRESS PATIENT'S CONCERNS

- Ask the patient about the main symptom(s) they are affected by and explore their concerns
- Recognise that URTIs can be worrying and uncomfortable for patients



### 2

## BE VIGILANT - ASSESS SEVERITY

In very rare cases, a URTI can be serious or the symptoms of a URTI can be early signs of another severe infection. If such signs should occur in the course of the disease, it may warrant further investigation or antibiotic treatment



## SERIOUS VIRAL INFECTION?

THESE VIRAL INFECTIONS MAY PRESENT WITH THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS:

### Infectious mononucleosis<sup>3</sup>

- Fever
- Lymphadenopathy
- Severe sore throat
- General symptoms (fatigue, myalgia, chills, sweats, anorexia, retro-orbital headache)
- Non-specific rash
- Splenomegaly
- Hepatomegaly

### Respiratory syncytial virus infection<sup>4</sup>

- Rhinitis
  - Cough
  - Fever
  - Ear infections and croup may also occur in children
- ### COVID-19<sup>5</sup>
- Fever
  - A new, continuous cough
  - Loss or change to sense of smell or taste

### Influenza<sup>6</sup>

Sudden onset of:

- Nasal discharge
- Cough
- Fever
- Gastrointestinal symptoms
- Fatigue
- Generalised pain (headache, myalgia and arthralgia)
- Ocular symptoms (photophobia, conjunctivitis and pain upon eye movement)

Patients with these symptoms may require further attention including:<sup>3-8</sup>

- Onward referral to a doctor or hospital
- Antiviral therapy where appropriate
- Antibiotics should be avoided as they are ineffective against viruses
  - Amoxicillin may cause a hypersensitivity reaction in patients with infectious mononucleosis
- Vaccination may be considered in high-risk groups

## POTENTIAL RISK FACTORS

■ BE ALERT TO THOSE PATIENTS AT INCREASED RISK OF COMPLICATIONS:<sup>9,10</sup>

- Elderly and frail patients or young children
- Immunocompromised or on certain drugs eg. corticosteroids, chemotherapy, carbimazole or disease-modifying drugs for arthritis
- Patients with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes, cystic fibrosis, chronic lung disease, HIV

### 3

## COUNSEL ON EFFECTIVE SELF-MANAGEMENT

- Reassure the patient of the non-serious nature of most URTIs and the likely duration of symptoms
- Explain why antibiotics are not necessary - use the information overleaf
- Recommend symptomatic relief, allowing for personal preferences
- Advise the patient to seek further medical advice if symptoms last longer than expected, do not improve, or if they develop new symptoms



## REFERENCES

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