

# Understand your symptoms

A runny or blocked nose, sore throat, sinus pain, cough and earache are all symptoms of an upper respiratory tract (upper airway) infection. This is most likely to be caused by coming into contact with a virus

- Your immune system can respond to infection
- Antibiotics are not recommended for most upper respiratory tract infections

# “How long until I feel better?”

It is normal for upper respiratory tract infections to take a while to clear up

**Earache**

Usually lasts  
4 days

**Sore throat**

Lasts up to  
1 week

**Common cold**

Usually lasts  
7-10 days

**Flu**

Lasts up to  
2 weeks

**Runny nose/nasal congestion**

Usually lasts  
1-2½ weeks

**Sinusitis**

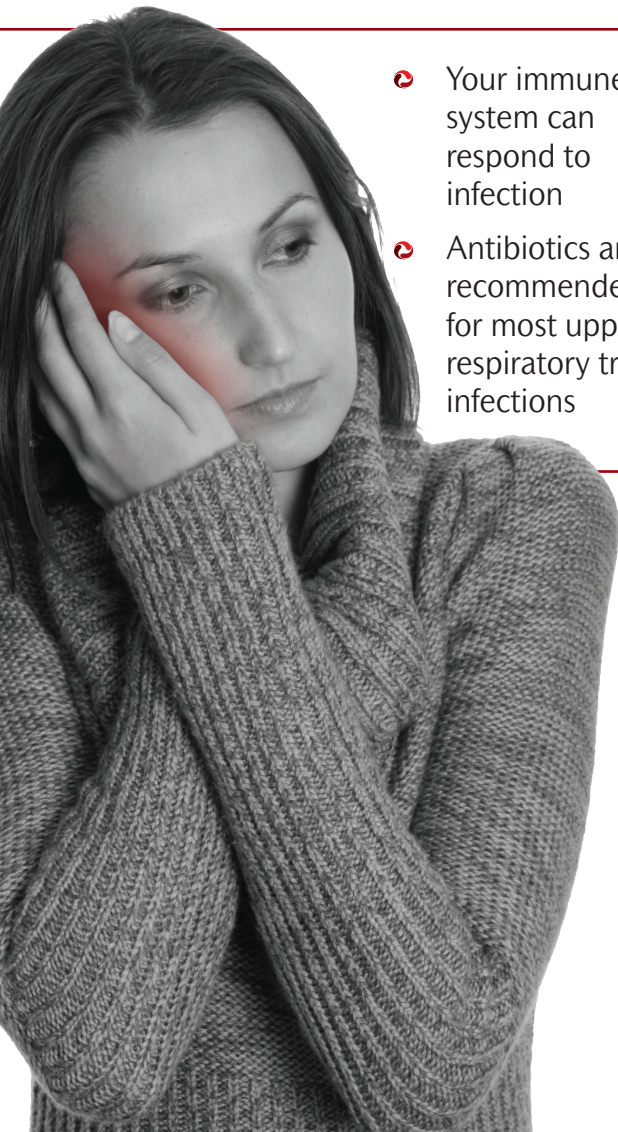
Usually lasts  
2-2½ weeks

**Dry/tickly cough**

Lasts up to  
3 weeks

Most symptoms are due to your body's response to fighting infection. To help you to start feeling better, you can treat your symptoms

**Ask your pharmacist for advice on symptom relief to help you get on with your life**



## “Do I need antibiotics?”

Antibiotics are not recommended for most upper respiratory tract infections

- Most infections are caused by viruses – unfortunately, antibiotics won't work against viruses
- Antibiotics won't make you feel better any faster and may cause unpleasant side effects, such as diarrhoea, thrush or a rash
- Taking antibiotics may disrupt the balance between good and bad bacteria in your gut, this balance is important for a healthy immune system

### Don't help bugs become superbugs

Superbugs can develop as a result of using too many antibiotics. Bacteria can adapt and survive against the effects of antibiotics, creating superbugs that are too powerful for antibiotics to work. This is known as antibiotic resistance

- Carrying resistant bacteria means antibiotics might not work for you in the future
- Resistance to antibiotics is a growing global problem and it will make treatment of infections much harder

**Did you know? You can carry resistant bacteria for up to one year after taking an antibiotic. That's why it's best to use antibiotics only when you really need them**

## Get the right relief for your symptoms

Upper respiratory tract infections affect everyone slightly differently. Your pharmacist can recommend specific products to treat your specific symptoms

Relief is as easy as 1, 2, 3:

### 1 Assess your symptoms

Help your pharmacist by providing a description of your symptoms and concerns, and make them aware of any existing medical conditions

### 2 Beat your symptoms

Ask your pharmacist for suitable medicines and formulations to treat your specific symptoms. Your pharmacist can also advise on symptoms that mean you should see your doctor

### 3 Care for yourself

Drink plenty of fluids, get more rest and make sure you get medicines that suit you best – there are formulations available for most people

**If your symptoms do not improve, or if you develop new symptoms, contact your doctor for more advice**

## Is your cold, sore throat, earache or cough getting you down?



**A guide to understanding your symptoms**