



## SELF-HELP ON:

ANTIBIOTICS

SELF-CARE

COLDS

SORE THROATS

DIARRHOEA & VOMITING

COUGHS

HAYFEVER

## ANTIBIOTIC RESISTANCE: GET THE RIGHT RELIEF FOR YOUR SYMPTOMS

Coughs, sore throats and blocked noses are all sign of an Upper Respiratory Tract Infection (URTI).

A URTI is caused by a virus. Viruses do not respond to antibiotics and may even cause unpleasant side effects such as diarrhoea, thrush or a rash.

As a result of using too many antibiotics, bugs can become superbugs and therefore can become too powerful for antibiotics to work.

The more we use antibiotics, the greater the chance that bacteria will become immune to them and we can no longer use them to treat infections. If you are experiencing symptoms of a URTI then speak to your pharmacist for suitable medicines to treat your specific symptoms.

If your symptoms do not then improve, then make an appointment with a Doctor or First Contact Practitioner.

## SELF-CARE

Self-care means keeping fit and healthy, as well as knowing how to take medicines, treat minor ailments and seek help when you need it. If you have a long-term condition, self-care is about understanding that condition and how to live with it. For more information on your condition, visit our website at [www.greyfriarssurgeryboston.co.uk](http://www.greyfriarssurgeryboston.co.uk), where you will find lots of information on treating your symptoms taken from the NHS choices website.

It is important that during the winter period that you keep your medicine cabinet well stocked with medicines for minor illnesses such as cough colds etc. It is important that you keep your medication out the reach of children.

## COLDS

A cold is a mild viral infection and usually lasts up to one to two weeks. **Symptoms of a cold include:**

- Runny nose
- Producing clear mucus which turns thicker and green as the cold develops
- Blocked nose
- Sore throat
- Sneezing
- Coughing
- Mild fever
- Earache/Headache
- Tiredness

There is no cure for a cold but you can look after yourself at home by resting, drinking plenty of fluids and eating healthily. You can also take over the counter Paracetamol and Ibuprofen or decongestant sprays or tablets which are available from your local pharmacy without a prescription. Colds are a very common virus and usually pass without the need for medical attention. Most colds in children will also pass without the need to see a GP, although they can take longer to clear up.

## SORE THROATS

Sore throats are normally a symptom of a bacterial or viral infection such as the common cold.

**You may experience symptoms such as:**

- Enlarged, tender glands in your neck
- Discomfort when swallowing
- High temp of 38C and over
- Aching muscles
- Tiredness
- Headache
- Earache
- Cough
- Runny Nose

Most sore throats are not serious and usually pass without the need for medical treatment.

**When to see the GP:**

If you have a persistently high temperature of 38C despite taking medication or your symptoms do not improve in a week.

## COUGHS

Common causes of a short-term cough include:

- Inhaled dust or smoke
- Flare up of a long-term conditions such as asthma or COPD
- An Upper Respiratory Tract Infection that affects the throat or sinuses such as cold, flu or sinusitis
- A Lower Respiratory Tract Infection that affects your lungs such as acute bronchitis or pneumonia
- Allergies such as allergic rhinitis or hay fever

A persistent long term cough may be caused by:

- Asthma
- Smoking
- Postnasal drip – mucus dripping down the throat caused by rhinitis or sinusitis

Rarely, a persistent cough can be a symptom of a more serious condition such as lung cancer, heart failure, a pulmonary embolism (blood clot on the lung) or tuberculosis.

## DIARRHOEA & VOMITING

Norovirus is one of the most common viruses in the UK which causes diarrhoea and vomiting. Although it can be very unpleasant, it usually clears up after a few days by itself. You can normally look after yourself and/or child at home.

Symptoms of norovirus include:

- Watery diarrhoea
- Suddenly feeling sick or projectile vomiting

Please try to avoid coming to the surgery if you are experiencing these symptoms as the norovirus is spread to others very easily. If you are concerned you can call the surgery on (01205) 311133 or NHS 111 for advice over the phone.

There is no cure for these symptoms, the best thing to do is stay at home and let the virus run its course.

To help ease either your own, or your child's symptoms:

- Drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration. You will need to drink more than usual to replace the fluids lost by vomiting or diarrhoea.
- Taking paracetamol for any fever or aches and pains
- Taking over the counter rehydration sachets or anti-diarrhoeal/anti-sickness medication from your local pharmacy

Diarrhoea and vomiting is more serious in babies than in older children. They can lose too much fluid easily from their bodies and become dehydrated. A dehydrated baby may not pass much urine, they can become lethargic or irritable or have a dry mouth.

## HAYFEVER

Hayfever is a common allergic condition and is an allergy to pollen. Symptoms include: sneezing, a runny nose & itchy eyes. There is currently no cure for hayfever; however symptoms can be controlled to a certain extent. Treatment includes antihistamines which can help prevent an allergic reaction occurring and corticosteroids which help to reduce inflammation and swelling. Basic self-help tips can help prevent symptoms as well such as:

- Staying indoors when the pollen count is high
- Taking a shower and changing your clothes after being outdoors to remove the pollen on your body
- Applying a small amount of Vaseline to the nasal opening to trap pollen grains
- Vacuuming regularly and dusting the house with a damp cloth to prevent the spread of pollen round the house