

Back-up Antibiotics – What You Need to Know Adults



You had an appointment on:

You were told to wait days before
using the antibiotic prescription.



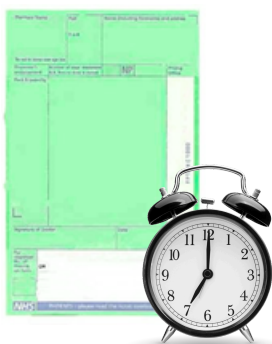
In this leaflet, ‘prescriber’ means
someone that writes a note, called a
prescription, for a medicine. A
‘prescriber’ can be a doctor, nurse,
pharmacist or other healthcare worker.

What are antibiotics?



Antibiotics are medicines used to fight some infections.

What is a back-up antibiotic prescription?



A back-up prescription means you have an antibiotic prescription, but you should wait to see if you need it.



This helps make sure antibiotics are used only when they are really needed.

It also helps them work well in the future.

Why have I been given a back-up antibiotic prescription?



The prescriber has checked you.

They think you might have an infection.



If you are usually healthy, your body can often fight infections on its own.

Your body can fight:

- Colds
- Most coughs
- Sore throats
- Earache

As most of these are caused by viruses.



Antibiotics do not work for viruses.

Your body can fight some infections on its own without antibiotics.



Only collect the antibiotic if you:

- Get worse
- Or don't start to feel better after the number of days the prescriber told you to wait.

Why not use antibiotics straight away?

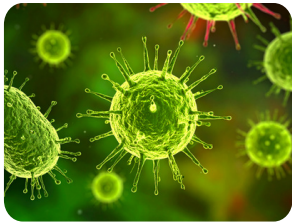


Antibiotics can sometimes cause:

- Upset tummy
- Diarrhoea (runny poo)
- Feeling sick
- Skin rashes



If you use antibiotics when you do not need them, germs can get stronger.



Next time, the antibiotic might not work when you need it.

This is called antibiotic resistance.

- To find about antibiotic resistance, visit: www.nhs.uk/medicines/antibiotics/antibiotic-antimicrobial-resistance

When will I feel better?



Most people start to feel better in a few days without antibiotics.

Some symptoms can take longer to go away.



Middle-ear infection:

- Most are better by 3 days
- Can last 7 to 8 days



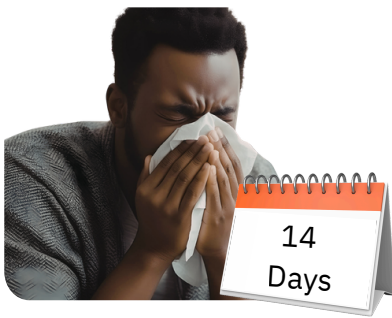
Sore throat:

- Can last 7 to 8 days



Sinusitis:

- Can last 14 to 21 days



Common cold:

- Can last 14 days



Cough or bronchitis:

- Can last 3 to 4 weeks



You probably will not need the antibiotic if:

- You are not getting worse
- And you are slowly improving

How long should I wait before using the antibiotic?



The prescriber will tell you how many days to wait.

For example: “Wait 3 days. If you aren’t feeling better by then, start the antibiotic.”

What if I get new or have new or worrying symptoms?



The prescriber will tell you what signs to look out for.

You can also find out more about new or worrying symptoms here:

<https://gqr.sh/Ewzb>.



If you get worse, or if you are worried, get help from:

- Your GP
- NHS 111
- Your local pharmacy
 - To find your local pharmacy, visit:
www.nhs.uk/service-search/pharmacy/find-a-pharmacy
- A&E or call 999 for emergencies



You know your body best.

If something feels wrong, get help.

How do I get the antibiotic if I need it?

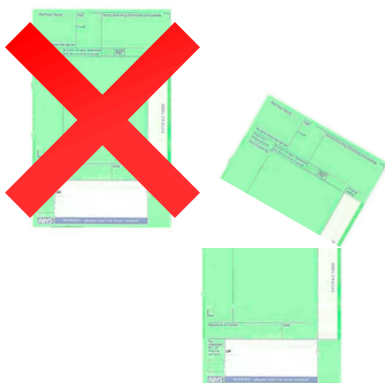


The prescriber will tell you how to get the medicine.



You might:

- Get a paper prescription to take to the pharmacy
- Be told to pick up a prescription from your GP surgery
- Be given a token for an electronic prescription — take the token to a pharmacy



If you feel better, don't collect or use the antibiotic.

If you already have the paper prescription, you can:

- Tear it up or shred it
- Return it to your GP practice



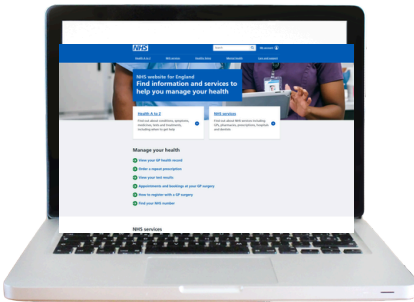
If you already have the antibiotic medicine, you can return it to your local pharmacy.

They will throw it away safely.



Don't save the paper prescription or the antibiotic medicine for later.

It might not be the right medicine next time.



You can get more advice on the NHS website:

- www.nhs.uk
- [RCGP Learning: https://ggr.sh/Ewzb](https://ggr.sh/Ewzb)

What to do

- Wait the number of days the prescriber told you
- If your child starts to feel better → **Do not use the antibiotic**
- If your child does not feel better → **Start the antibiotic**
- If your child gets worse → **Get help**