**How can I manage my common infection?**

**A leaflet for adults aged 16 years and over**

#  1. What are the symptoms of a common infection?

**A**


## Eyes

* Sticky eyes **A**

**C B**

## Chest

* Cough
* Shortness of breath **C**
* Green or yellow **E**

mucus

**B**

## Ears, nose and throat

* Pain or soreness
* Runny nose
* Swollen tonsils

**D**

## Gut

* Vomiting
* Diarrhoea

**E**

## Skin

* Infected blisters
* Redness or swelling around a wound
* Athlete’s foot (an itchy rash between the toes)

**F**

## Genital and urinary

**D**

* + Pain on passing urine

**F** • Passing urine more often at night

* + Cloudy urine
	+ Discharge
	+ Pain in lower tummy

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TARGET is operated by the UK Health Security Agency.

Developed in collaboration with professional medical bodies.

If you think you may have COVID-19 then please visit [http://**www.gov.uk/coronavirus**](http://www.gov.uk/coronavirus) or [**http://www.nhs.uk**](http://www.nhs.uk/) for the latest guidance and information.

**2. What if I think I have coronavirus (Covid-19)?**

#  3. How can I treat a common infection?

**Get plenty of rest** until you feel better.

**Take pain relief** if you need to (make sure you follow the instructions).

**Drink plenty of fluids** (6 to 8 drinks, or 2 litres) so that you pass pale-coloured urine regularly.

**Drink more**

For **coughs**, try honey and cough medicines.

For **sore throats**, try medicated lozenges and pain relief.

Soothe **eye infections** with a clean warm or cold damp flannel.

For an **outer ear infection,** apply local heat (such as a warm flannel).


# How long could my infection last?

### Cough Sore throat or earache

**Common cold**

**Norovirus**

(winter vomiting)

### Sinus infection

21 days 7 to 8 days 14 days 2 to 3 days 14 to 21 days

**Contact your GP** if your symptoms are getting worse or if you are not better by the times above.

# Will my infection need antibiotics to get better?

* Your **body can normally fight off** common infections on its own.
* You do not usually need antibiotics, unless symptoms of a **bacterial** infection (such as a urine infection) are severe – a healthcare professional can advise you on this.
* Taking antibiotics when you do not need to puts you and your family at risk.

### Follow your healthcare professional’s advice on antibiotics.

Find out more about antibiotics at [**www.antibioticguardian.com**](http://www.antibioticguardian.com/)

# How can I stop my infection from spreading?

### If you need to cough or sneeze:

**Catch it**

with a tissue (or your inner elbow)

### Bin it Kill it

throw away used tissues

by cleaning

your hands

**Clean hands** for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or hand sanitiser:

 before preparing and eating food after using the toilet

 after touching pets or animals when leaving and arriving home

**Avoid** touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unclean hands.

If possible, **keep your distance from others** (2 meters or 6 feet), especially vulnerable people in your household.

**Do not share items** that come into contact with your mouth, such as eating utensils and toothbrushes.

Visit or call a **pharmacy for further advice** on common infections

**Keep** yourself and your family **up to date with vaccinations. Always get winter vaccines** (such as flu) if you are eligible.


# What symptoms of serious illness should I look out for?

**Severe** headache and vomiting

Problems **swallowing**

**Turning blue** around the mouth

Ongoing **fever or chills** (temperature above 38ºC or less than 36ºC)

Coughing **blood**

**Breathing** faster or slower than usual

**Chest pain** or tightness

New **very fast or slow pulse**

**Kidney pain** in your back just under your ribs

Visible **blood** in urine

**Severe pain** on passing urine, or passing more urine at night

**Cloudy urine** not improving in 1 to 2 days with fluid

**If you have the symptoms above, contact your GP urgently or use the following services for your region.**

 **NHS England NHS Direct Wales**

**NHS Scotland Northern Ireland**



[**www.111.nhs.uk**](http://www.111.nhs.uk)[**www.111.wales.nhs.uk**](http://www.111.wales.nhs.uk/)[**www.nhs24.scot**](http://www.nhs24.scot/) **Contact your**

**GP practice**

These services can provide a confidential interpreter if you need one.

# What if I suspect signs of sepsis?

Sepsis is a life-threatening reaction to an infection. Possible signs are:

* + **s**lurred speech, confusion or drowsiness
	+ **e**xtreme shivering
	+ **p**assing no urine in a day
	+ **s**evere breathlessness
	+ **i**t feels like you’re going to die, and
	+ **s**kin blotchy or discoloured.