

Useful tips to help you deal with viral illnesses such as common colds, coughs and sore throats:

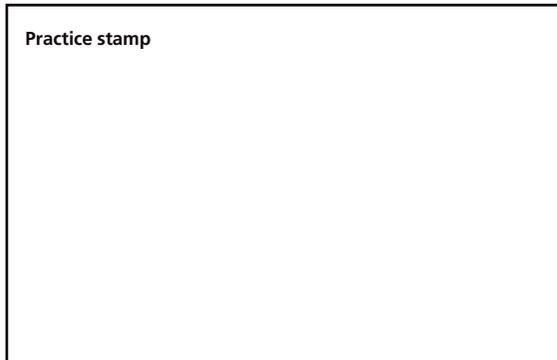
- Make sure you are drinking plenty of fluids so you do not get dehydrated.
- Take paracetamol if you have fever or aches and pains. Read the package instructions carefully and never take more than is recommended (not more than 8 in 24 hours for adults).

Before taking paracetamol make sure you are not taking any other medicines containing paracetamol (ask your pharmacist for advice if you are not sure). Please note, cold and flu remedies often contain paracetamol.

- Some people find cough linctuses helpful - your pharmacist can advise you on which one is most suitable for you.
- Sucking a lozenge or sweet is soothing for sore throats.
- Steam inhalations can also help clear mucus and ease chest tightness. Do not use for young children.

Remember—steam can cause burns.

For further information contact:



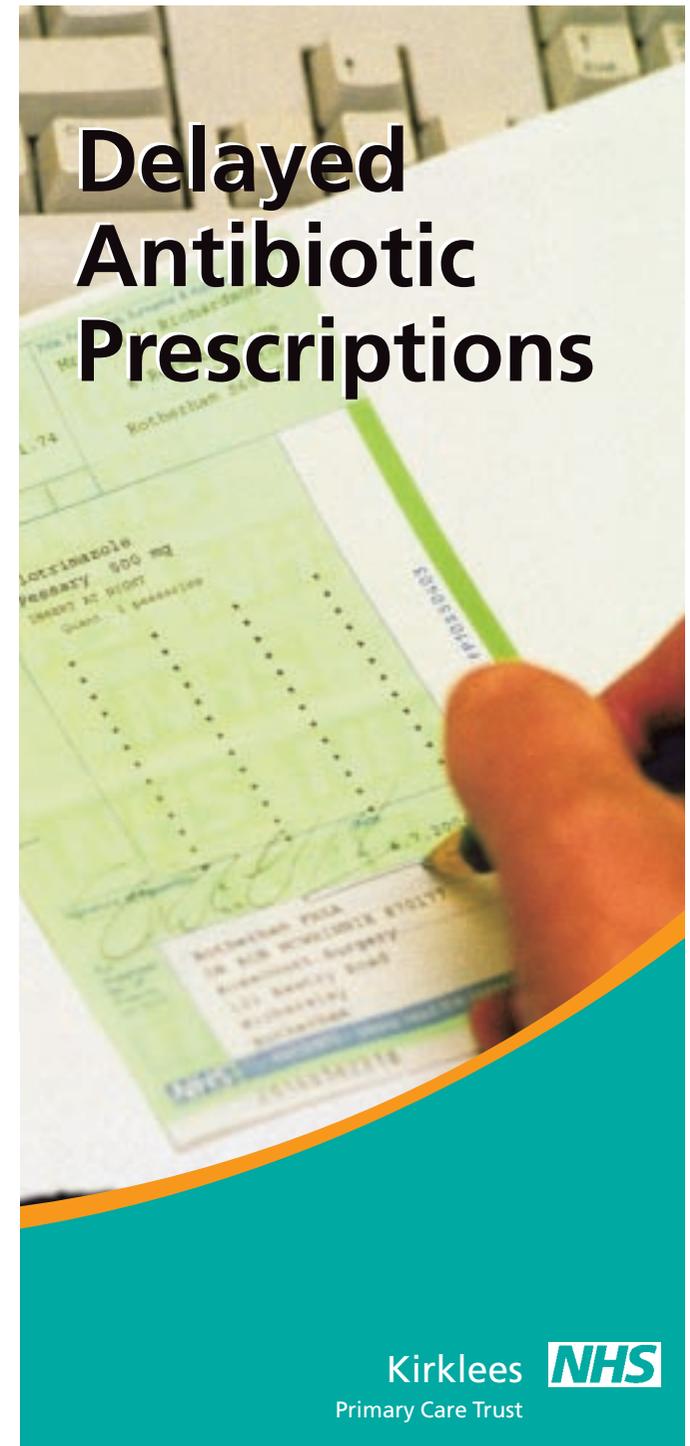
For further copies of this leaflet contact the Communications team on 01484 466004.

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What is a delayed antibiotic prescription?

Delayed or 'if needed' prescriptions are written on the basis that they are not to be used straight away, but can be 'cashed in' later if symptoms get worse or have not improved after three days.

About your visit to the doctor today

The doctor has examined you during your visit to the surgery, and even though you feel unwell, he or she has not found any condition that definitely needs antibiotics today.



When will I start to feel better?

Feeling better, even with prescribed treatment, is likely to take up to two weeks to complete. Assuming you are not getting any worse, you need not worry if your symptoms take this time to settle, especially if you are getting gradually better each day.

What happens if I don't feel any better after three days?

Your symptoms will quite likely get better by themselves, and you will not need any antibiotics. However, your doctor has written you a prescription today, which will be at the surgery for you to collect in case your symptoms have not improved after three days.

Use your judgement about whether to get the prescription dispensed or 'cashed in'. With this system you do not need to see the doctor again.

What should I do if I get any new or worrying symptoms?

Contact the surgery and make an appointment if you develop any new or worrying symptoms at any stage, or if your symptoms have not improved after two weeks.

What you should know about antibiotics:

- Antibiotics have no effect on viral illnesses, such as the common cold, most coughs and sore throats, because they fight only bacterial infections.
- Most viral illnesses get better by themselves.
- Antibiotics can have unpleasant side effects (thrush, rash, tummy upsets/diarrhoea).
- Antibiotics can be helpful when used appropriately, but using them unnecessarily can produce resistant bacteria, making antibiotics less effective when they are needed.

Resistance is a growing problem and there are already some bacteria that are resistant to several different types of antibiotic, so-called 'super bugs'. It is important to prevent more resistant bacteria developing, so that antibiotics will keep working when we really need them to treat severe and life-threatening infections.