

# Evidence based advice on RTIs

## NORMAL DURATION OF RTIs

- Otitis media: 4 days
- Sore throat/pharyngitis/tonsillitis: 1 week
- Common cold: 1 ½ weeks
- Acute rhinosinusitis: 2 ½ weeks
- Cough: 3 weeks

## NB: CHILDREN UNDER 5 WITH FEVER

- 5 days or more of fever need to be seen: AMBER risk
- 0-3 months: temp over 38 or 3-6 months over 39 need to be seen within 2 hours: RED risk

## ACUTE OTITIS MEDIA

Ear infections are very common in young children; last 4 days; painkillers main treatment unless with a discharge or under 2 years, both ears.

- 3/4 of all children have had an ear infection by age 2
- Commonest between 3-18 months
- Not unusual to have up to 3 attacks a year
- Will usually last 4 days

Nice recommends ONLY consider antibiotics if:

There is a discharge, or under 2 with infection in both ears

### When to seek advice

- High temp not coming down
- New discharge
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Floppy
- Lethargy
- Severely unwell
- Irritable
- Unwell and still not clearing after 2-3 days

## COUGH

- 90% cough last up to 3 weeks, whether or not treated with antibiotics even if chest signs present.

### When to seek advice

- Getting worse
- Coughing up blood
- Cough lasts for more than three to four weeks.
- Develop chest and/or shoulder pain.
- Difficult breathing
- Losing weight over a period of six weeks or more
- Voice becomes hoarse.
- Ends of fingers take on a 'club-like' shape.
- New swellings in the neck or above the collar bones.

## DELAYED PRESCRIBING OR NO PRESCRIBING STRATEGY

if not at risk of complications:

- Elderly
- Very ill
- Co-morbidities e.g. COPD
- Significant history

## SORE THROAT

- 90% clear within 1 week, antibiotics or not
- Do not give antibiotics unless 3 or more Centor criteria present:

- Tonsillar exudates
- Cervical lymphadenopathy
- History of fever
- Absence of a cough

### When to seek advice

- Persistent high temperature for more than three days that does not come down with ibuprofen and/or paracetamol.
- Not getting better or that gets worse – after 4 to 5 days
- Hard to breathe in or your throat feels like it's closing up
- Drooling and difficult to swallow.
- Pain is severe and does not respond to over the counter pain killers.
- Voice becomes muffled.
- Difficult to drink enough fluids and become dehydrated
- Symptoms so bad that they prevent you from functioning normally.
- Immunocompromised (including steroids)