



Back-up antibiotic prescribing

Information for patients



Written by the **All Wales Therapeutics and Toxicology Centre** and the **All Wales Medicines Strategy Group**. It is an easy read version of 'Back-up antibiotic prescribing Patient Information Leaflet'.

How to use this booklet



This is an easy read booklet. But you may still need support to read it. Ask someone you know to help you.



Words in **bold blue writing** may be hard to understand. We have explained what they mean after each hard word.



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About prescribers



Medicine is often **prescribed** by a doctor, but other healthcare workers like some nurses and pharmacists can also do this. In this booklet we call these people **prescribers**.



Prescribe means giving you a note, called a **prescription**, for the medicine you need to take.

What is back-up antibiotic prescribing?



Antibiotics are medicines used to treat infections caused by certain types of bacteria.

Back-up antibiotic **prescribing** means:



- the doctor gives you a **prescription** for an antibiotic,
- but tells you to **wait** a few days before getting it.



This is sometimes called **delayed prescribing**.



If you feel better, you do not need to get the antibiotic.

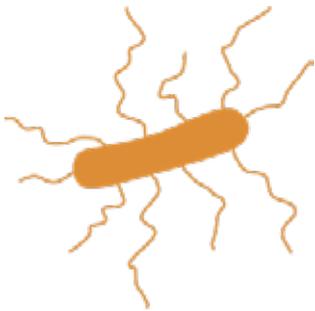


If your symptoms get worse or you do not get better after a few days, you can get the antibiotic from a pharmacy.

Why have I been given a back-up prescription?



Your **prescriber** thinks you **might** have an infection.



Antibiotics only help with infections caused by bacteria.



They do not help with infections caused by viruses, like a cold, most coughs or sore throats. It is better to let your body fight a virus on its own.



Your **prescriber** does not think you need an antibiotic now. They have given you a **prescription** to use if your symptoms get worse or you do not get better.

When will I start to feel better?



Your **prescriber** will tell you how long your symptoms might last. If you are feeling a bit better each day, do not worry if it takes longer to fully get better.



If you feel better you should not collect the antibiotic at all.

How many days should I wait?



You will probably get better on your own without an antibiotic.



If you have a back-up **prescription**, your **prescriber** should have told you how long to wait. Like, “wait 3 days and then start the antibiotic if you are not feeling better”.



Usually, you do not need to see the **prescriber** again.

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



Call your GP surgery to book to speak with your doctor.

Can anyone have a back-up prescription?



No.



Babies under 3 months old should never have back-up **prescriptions**.



Children under 2 years usually do not get back-up **prescriptions**.



People with certain health conditions, like diabetes, might need antibiotics right away.

How can I get my antibiotic if I need it?



Your **prescriber** might give you a **prescription** during your consultation, and tell you to wait a certain number of days. If you still need the antibiotic after waiting, or if you feel worse at any time, take the **prescription** to a pharmacy.

Or



Your **prescriber** might ask you to pick up a paper **prescription** later, from your GP clinic or a pharmacy.

Or



Your **prescriber** might ask you to contact your GP for a **prescription** after waiting a few days, or if you get worse.



If you get a back-up **prescription**, make sure you know how and when you can get your antibiotic.

What if I do not need the antibiotic prescription?



If you do not need it, please get rid of it. Return it to your GP clinic or a pharmacy, or shred it.



Do not keep it. It might not be the right antibiotic for future infections.

Why should I not take an antibiotic 'just in case'?



Side effects

A side effect is when you take a medicine and it has an effect that you do not want.

Antibiotics can make you:



- feel sick



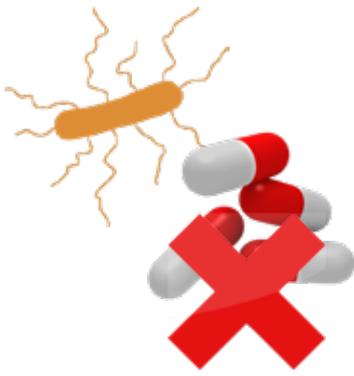
- be sick



- have runny poo



- have skin rashes.



Resistance

Using antibiotics too much can make bacteria stronger and infections harder to treat. This means antibiotics might not work when you do need them.

Ways to help with colds, coughs and sore throats



- **Rest** – get plenty of rest.



- **Drink** – have 6 to 8 drinks a day.



- **Medicine** – use paracetamol or ibuprofen (if suitable) for fever or aches. Follow the instructions on the packet.

Make sure you are not taking other medicines that have paracetamol in. Ask a pharmacist if you are not sure. Cold and flu treatments often contain paracetamol.



- **Cough syrup** – ask your pharmacist for help choosing the right type.



- **Throat sweets** – suck on a sweet to soothe your throat.



- **Steam** – breathing in steam can help clear your nose and chest. Do not use it for young children. Be careful as steam can burn.