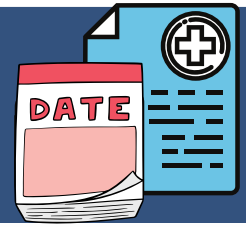
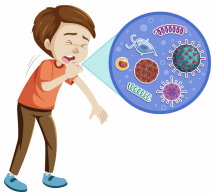


Back-up antibiotic prescribing



Back-up (also called “delayed”) antibiotic prescribing is when a prescription for an antibiotic is written but is not to be collected and used straight away.

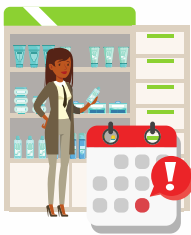
Why have I been given a back-up prescription?



Your prescriber has assessed your symptoms and has seen signs that you might have an infection. Antibiotics will only fight infections that are caused by bacteria. Antibiotics have no effect on infections caused by a virus, such as the common cold, most coughs and sore throats.



If your infection is caused by a virus, antibiotics do not make the symptoms go away quicker and you might get unwanted effects from taking antibiotics, such as diarrhoea, feeling sick (nausea), being sick (vomiting) and skin rashes.



You can take the prescription to a pharmacy later, to collect the antibiotic, if your symptoms get worse or if symptoms have not got any better after a specific number of days.

When will I start to feel better?

Your prescriber will advise you about how long your symptoms might last. As long as you are not getting any worse, you do not need to worry if your symptoms take this amount of time to settle, especially if you are getting gradually better each day.

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

Is there a specific number of days to wait?

If your prescriber has written you a back-up prescription they should have given you specific instructions about how long to wait; for example, “wait another 3 days and start the antibiotic if you are not feeling better by then”.

Your prescriber will have told you when you should seek further advice. Contact your GP surgery and make an appointment if you develop any new or worrying symptoms.

How can I access my antibiotic if I need to?

You will most likely not need the antibiotic, but if you do, there are several ways to access it.



Your prescriber may give you a prescription during your consultation with advice for you to wait a certain number of days. You should only take it to a pharmacy to get the antibiotic if you still need it after waiting the specified number of days.



Your prescriber may ask you to collect a paper prescription from an agreed location at a later date (for example, collect it from your GP reception or from a pharmacy).



Your prescriber may ask you to contact your GP practice again to get a prescription after waiting a certain number of days.

You should make sure you know which method your prescriber has used, and that you fully understand how and when you can get your antibiotic prescription.

If you do not need the prescription, please destroy it. Do not be tempted to keep it – because it might not be the right medication for a future infection.

Useful tips to help you treat viral illnesses



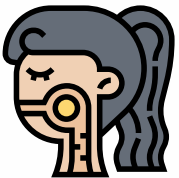
Get plenty of rest until you feel better



Drink plenty of fluids (6–8 drinks, or 2 litres, a day) so you do not get dehydrated



Take paracetamol or ibuprofen if you have a fever or aches and pains; make sure you follow the instructions on the packet. Before taking paracetamol, make sure you are not taking any other medicines containing paracetamol - ask your pharmacist for advice if you are not sure. Cold and flu remedies often contain paracetamol.



Suck a lozenge or sweet to soothe a sore throat.



You might find a cough medicine helpful - your pharmacist can advise you on which one is most suitable for you.



Inhaling steam can also help to clear mucus and ease chest tightness. Do not use steam inhalation for young children. Remember that steam can cause burns.

Access this leaflet on your phone:

