COUGHS, Colds & Sore Throats
Manage symptoms without antibiotics

If you have a viral infection of the ear, nose, throat, sinuses or chest, antibiotics won't make you feel better or recover faster. Talk to your healthcare provider about why you probably don’t need antibiotics.

Do you need a medicine?

Coughs, colds, earaches, sinus congestion problems and sore throats are usually caused by a virus. Antibiotics kill bacteria, not viruses. Colds usually get better in 7 to 10 days, although a cough can last up to 3 weeks.

What can you do?

Rest
Allow your immune system to fight off the virus.

Use home remedies
Inhale steam from a bath or shower in a closed room to help relieve a blocked nose. Don’t inhale steam from a bowl of hot water due to the risk of burns.

Soothe your sore throat by gargling warm salty water, sucking ice cubes or throat lozenges as needed or drinking warm water with honey and lemon.

Use symptom-relieving medicines
Take over-the-counter (non-prescription) medicines such as paracetamol or ibuprofen to relieve your pain or fever.

Use a nasal or oral decongestant to relieve a blocked nose. Cough and cold medicines should not be given to children under 6 years of age and should only be given to children aged 6 to 11 years on the advice of a doctor, pharmacist or nurse practitioner. Saline nasal spray or drops may be used in children.

It’s OK to ask questions

If you have questions about your symptoms or your medicines, speak with your doctor or other healthcare provider.

For more information visit the website:
www.choosingwisely.org.au/#consumers

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