

What about bacterial infections?

Normally infections such as cough/bronchitis, sore ear, sore throat and nasal symptoms are caused by viral infections, but sometimes they can be caused by bacterial infections.

Your child's own immune system can clear many of these infections without the need for antibiotics. Antibiotics do little to speed up your child's recovery from most common infections.

However if your child has a more serious bacterial infection such as meningitis or pneumonia they will require treatment with antibiotics. This is why it is important to use antibiotics wisely, to ensure they are more likely to work when your child really needs them.

Contact your doctor:

- If your child's symptoms appear to change or become worse.
- If he/she does not begin to improve after a few days.
- If you are worried that a serious illness is developing.

Remember:

- Doctors are skilled in knowing which conditions need antibiotics.
- Do not be surprised if your doctor does not prescribe an antibiotic for your child for a viral infection, or even for a mild bacterial infection.

Meningitis

Symptoms of meningitis can develop within hours. Seek **urgent** medical advice if your child shows symptoms related to meningitis:

- Sudden onset of high temperature.
- High temperature but cold hands & feet.
- Very severe headache.
- Dislike of bright lights.
- Drowsiness, blank staring, inactivity.
- High pitched moaning or whimpering.
- Vomiting and diarrhoea.
- Infant not feeding.
- Painful joints or limbs (particularly leg pain).
- Difficulty breathing.
- Fitting.
- Stiff neck.
- Pale or blotchy complexion.
- Rash that does not fade with pressure (pinprick blood spots under the skin, spreading to form bruises under the skin).

For further information: Speak to your doctor, practice nurse or pharmacist.

Does my child need an antibiotic?



Patient information leaflet on common infections in children: Coughs, Colds & Sore Throats, Runny/Blocked Nose