



Know your Bugs

**A complete guide to running
the Know your Bugs session**

Introduction

The aim of this session is to bring together everything the participants have learnt throughout the course and to get participants thinking about their own health and antibiotic use. We would like to empower participants to make decisions on their own health, hygiene and self-care.

Learning outcomes

Aim to understand:

- How to self-care at home when they are ill
- When to go to the doctor
- Where to access health information
- What information can be gained from healthcare leaflets

Key words

Doctor, information, leaflet, website, app, online

Available web resources

Link to healthcare leaflets
Posters for previous sessions

Materials required

Printed leaflets

Introduction (20-25 mins)

Begin by reminding participants that most infections can be treated at home with rest and fluid. Medication, such as paracetamol, can be used to relieve the symptoms of cold and flu, but it is advisable to speak to a pharmacist who will be able to recommend which medication is required. You should see a doctor if symptoms become more severe or the illness has lasted longer than expected.

Ask participants if they know how long common illnesses normally last. The information is given in the table below:

Your infection	Usually lasts	How to treat yourself better for these infections, now and next time
Middle-ear infection	4 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have plenty of rest. • Drink enough fluids to avoid feeling thirsty. • Ask your local pharmacist to recommend medicines to help your symptoms or pain (or both). • Fever is a sign the body is fighting the infection and usually gets better by itself in most cases. You can use paracetamol (or ibuprofen) if you or your child are uncomfortable as a result of a fever. • When you cough or sneeze, use a tissue or your sleeve if you have no tissue (not your hand) and wash your hands well to help prevent spread of your infection to your family, friends and others you meet.
Sore throat	7 days	
Common cold	10 days	
Sinusitis	18 days	
Cough or bronchitis	3 weeks	
Winter vomiting	2-3 days	

Activity 1 – How to take antibiotics correctly (15 - 20 mins)

Participants will use the worksheets provided (**PW1, PW2 and PW3**) to learn about how to take antibiotics correctly.

Give each participant a copy of the worksheets. The worksheets have three scenarios, which teaches the group not to take antibiotics for coughs and cold, to take antibiotics as prescribed and not to use other people's or left-over antibiotics.

For each scenario, discuss with the group the possible correct and incorrect answers. An answer sheet is provided to aid discussions.

Learning outcomes achieved:

1. How to self-care at home when they are ill
2. When to go to the doctor

Activity 2 – Accessing Health Information Online (15 mins)

Ask the participants where they usually find health information? The students may talk about websites or leaflets. What websites do the participants use? Discuss websites and apps that provide good information.

Websites:

- NHS choices– (www.nhs.uk/pages/home.aspx)
Participants can search for their local NHS services, GP, A+E or dentists, and also search for their symptoms to get an idea about where and how they could seek help.
- Patient- (www.patient.info)
Another helpful website for participants to search for symptoms and health information
- Time to change (www.time-to-change.org.uk) or Mind (www.mind.org.uk) for information on mental health.
- Treat Yourself Better (www.treatyourselfbetter.co.uk)
Advice on how to treat cold and flu symptoms at home, including information on how long symptoms will last

Untrustworthy websites to avoid:

Be sure to tell participants to watch out for untrustworthy websites. These can be ones that are out of date, trying to sell something, or requesting your information. The best domain names of trustworthy websites are: .gov, .org, or .edu

Wikipedia is one to avoid –anyone can edit pages and these can commonly contain errors.

Apps:

- ‘Sugar Swap change4life’ App developed by Public Health England. Allows you to scan the bar code of drinks and shows you how much sugar is in it.
- Brush DJ- This free award-winning app, developed by a dentist plays 2 minutes of music from your devices music library while you brush your teeth and also has a visual display showing where to brush.

Activity 3 – Health Information Leaflets (15 mins)

A selection of leaflets can be provided to the participants. Ask if they think they would find them useful. What information do the leaflets give? When might you use these?

Talk through the leaflets and allow the participants to become familiar with the type of language used and what information can be gained from them.

Recommended leaflet

Managing Your Infection: A step by step guide on how to manage your infection

Downloadable from www.e-Bug.eu/Beat-The-Bugs under the “Know Your Bugs” section.

The leaflet is designed to be printed as an A5 booklet and is a pictorial self-care leaflet suitable for a range of community groups.



The Managing Your Infection leaflet provides information on how you can help make yourself better when you are ill, how long symptoms usually last, what serious symptoms to look out for and where to get help.

The main aims of the leaflet are:

- to provide community groups with information on self-care
- to increase awareness and change behaviour around antibiotic use in community groups

Step 1: How to help make yourself better
Whatever your infection, you can do the following to help.

Take paracetamol to reduce a fever. Always follow the instructions.

Ask your pharmacist for advice on reducing your symptoms.

Drink enough fluids to avoid feeling thirsty.

Wash your hands to help prevent infections spreading.

Step 2: Check how long your symptoms last

Earache
An earache usually lasts 4 days

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Sore throat
A sore throat usually lasts 7 days

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Cold
A cold usually lasts 7-10 days

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Cough
A cough usually lasts 2-3 weeks

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Step 3: Look out for serious symptoms
If you have an infection and develop any of the symptoms below, you should be seen urgently by a doctor. Ring your GP practice or call NHS 111, NHS Direct Wales or NHS 24.

Severe headache, Very cold skin, Trouble breathing, Feeling confused, Chest pain, Problems swallowing, Coughing blood, Feeling a lot worse.

Step 4: Where to get help

NHS England: CALL 111
NHS Direct Wales: 0845 46 47
NHS Scotland: NHS 24

Emergency
If you have an emergency, call 999 immediately.

Optional leaflets:

- When Should I Worry?
(www.whenshouldiworry.com/resources/Booklet_England.pdf)
Guide for parents on coughs, colds, earache and sore throats
- Treating Your Infection Patient Leaflet (www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/toolkits/~link.aspx?id=9FCF9DA4B4A045519593320478DFD9E7&z=z)
Includes information on how long common illnesses last
- Self-care Forum factsheets (www.selfcareforum.org/fact-sheets/)
Particularly the fact sheets on coughs, sore throats and common cold
- Caring for coughs booklet (www.biomedcentral.com/content/supplementary/1748-5908-8-134-S1.pdf)

Discussion

Ask what the participants think is the main thing they will take away from the session.

Acknowledgements

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Antibiotics Scenarios

Scenario 1

Amy had a runny nose and really sore throat so she went to the doctor

Discussion points:

- Many infections get better on their own without the need for antibiotics.
- Antibiotics won't make a difference to how long your symptoms/illness/infection lasts.
- All runny noses are caused by viruses which antibiotics do not work on – so there is no point having an antibiotic.
- If you become ill very quickly, have a red throat with high temperature and no cough or runny nose, more likely to benefit from antibiotics.

Scenario 2

Alisha has a urine infection and has been prescribed antibiotics by her doctor

Discussion points:

Correct options:-

- Do what the doctor says and take them for the 3 days.
- Take the left-overs back to the chemist.
- If you take more days, your bugs are more likely to become resistant, and the antibiotics won't work the next time you need them.
- Don't take any extras as that will kill more of your useful bugs in your gut too.

Incorrect options if needed:-

- Keep the rest for next time.
- Stop taking them now. What's the point in taking them if you are feeling better?
- Take the whole pack and then you'll definitely kill the bugs.

Antibiotics Scenarios

Scenario 3: Chloe was talking to her friend Jamie about her headache and cough.

	Correct	Incorrect
Gosh no, I shouldn't take anyone else's antibiotics.	✓	
Great idea – we have some left-over from when my sister had an ear infection.		✓
Yes I had a cough a few weeks ago and went to the out of hours and they gave me a prescription, but I didn't bother to cash it in. I'll do it now!		✓
I don't have any antibiotics in the cupboard – don't you always take them back to the chemist?	✓	
I've never had any antibiotics – so we don't have any in the cupboard.	✓	
I had a water infection last month. I'll use the left-over antibiotics from them.		✓
I shouldn't take antibiotics that are left over.	✓	
I don't have any at home, but I'll ask Josie, she is always at the doctor with her coughs.		✓
I only take antibiotics if the doctor prescribes them.	✓	
I think I should just take some pain relief and go to bed.	✓	

Antibiotics Scenarios

Scenario 1: Ash had a runny nose and really sore throat so he went to the doctor.



Doctor: A runny nose isn't helped by antibiotics. Go home and go to bed, take some pain killers for your sore throat.

Ash: But I'm really ill. Surely antibiotics will help?

Doctor: I know sore throats can make you feel really ill and they can last a week. The pharmacist will be able to give you something for your pain.

Ash: What if I get really bad?



DISCUSSION

Discuss whether you agree or disagree with Ash going to the pharmacy?

Discuss what you think Ash might be worried about?

Antibiotics Scenarios

Scenario 2: Alisha is talking to her friend Anna about her urine infection. Alisha has been prescribed antibiotics by her doctor.



Alisha: I've been given antibiotics for my urine infection. The doctor told me to take them for 3 days, morning and evening. After 3 days I've still got some left, what shall I do with the ones left over now I feel better?

Anna: Why don't you just take them, it will make sure you get rid of all the infection.



DISCUSSION

Discuss whether you agree or disagree with Anna?

Discuss what you think Alisha should do with her leftover antibiotics?

Antibiotics Scenarios

Scenario 3: Chloe was talking to her friend Jamie about her headache and cough.

Chloe: My headache really hurts and I have a bad cough



Jamie: Don't you have any antibiotics in a cupboard at home you could take?

What should Chloe say? Discuss the correct and incorrect options.

Statement	Correct	Incorrect
Gosh no, I shouldn't take anyone else's antibiotics.		
Great idea – we have some left-over from when my sister had an ear infection.		
Yes I had a cough a few weeks ago and went to the out of hours and they gave me a prescription, but I didn't bother to cash it in. I'll do it now!		
I don't have any antibiotics in the cupboard – don't you always take them back to the chemist?		
I've never had any antibiotics – so we don't have any in the cupboard.		
I had a water infection last month. I'll use the left-over antibiotics from them.		
I shouldn't take antibiotics that are left over.		
I don't have any at home, but I'll ask Josie, she is always at the doctor with her coughs.		
I only take antibiotics if the doctor prescribes them.		
I think I should just take some pain relief and go to bed.		

BEAT THE BUGS

This pack contains a series of educational hygiene resources for community groups.

This six week course has information, suggested lesson plans and possible activities for you to use in your community groups to help you inspire and inform individuals.

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