



Patient name: _____

Date: _____

Your symptoms suggest that you have a viral infection.

- Upper Respiratory Tract Infection (Common Cold): Lasts 7-14 days
- Flu: Lasts 7-14 days
- Acute Pharyngitis (Sore Throat): Lasts 3-10 days
- Acute Bronchitis (Chest Cold/Cough): Lasts 7-21 days
- Acute Sinusitis (Sinus Infection): Lasts 7-14 days

Your body needs time to fight the virus. Here's what you can do to feel better:

- Rest as much as possible.
- Drink plenty of fluids.
- Wash your hands frequently.
- Take over-the-counter medication:
 - Acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol®) for fever and aches
 - Ibuprofen (e.g., Advil®) for fever and aches
 - Naproxen (e.g., Aleve®) for fever and aches
 - Lozenge (e.g., Luden's® Throat Drops) for sore throat
 - Nasal Saline (e.g., Ayr Saline Nasal Mist) for nasal congestion
 - Other: _____

Call your doctor again if:

- Your symptoms do not improve in _____ days, or get worse.
- You develop persistent fever (above 100.4°F, or _____).
- Other: _____

Signed: _____

Three things you need to know about antibiotics

- **They won't work on your cold or flu.** Antibiotics won't work on viral infections like the common cold or other upper respiratory conditions. They should be used to treat bacterial infections like strep throat, urinary tract infections, and bacterial sinus and ear infections.
- **They can cause side effects** like diarrhea, nausea, or abdominal pain. They may also cause bad reactions with certain drugs or could cause allergic rashes, fungal infections (yeast infections in women or oral thrush), or sun sensitivity. Almost one out of every six emergency room visits for bad drug reactions are from antibiotics.*
- **Not using them the right way can harm public health.** If you take antibiotics when you don't need them, or you don't finish your prescriptions, it can give bacteria more opportunities to evolve and outsmart the drugs used to kill them. This is called antibiotic resistance and it may make treating simple infections more difficult.

Your doctor will tell you if you need an antibiotic.

Learn more at [cdc.gov/antibiotic-use](https://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use).

