



WHAT TO EXPECT AFTER ANTIBIOTICS & WHEN TO SEE US AGAIN

CHEST INFECTION/PNEUMONIA

Most coughs do not require antibiotics. If your clinician has decided that you need antibiotics then you can expect the following;

Fever should settle by the end of the antibiotic course.

Cough may continue for 2-3 weeks after treatment, this could also be with sputum production but this will gradually improve over time. Remember cough and sputum are caused by inflammation which takes a while to settle after the bacterial infection has been treated. Breathlessness and fatigue may also continue for 2-3 weeks after treatment.

See us again if fever does not settle, breathlessness is severe, develop any pain in the chest, coughing up any blood-stained sputum, symptoms persist 3 weeks after treatment.

SORE THROAT/TONSILITIS

Most sore throats and even tonsillitis infections do not require antibiotics. If your clinician has decided that you need antibiotics then you can expect the following;

Fever should settle by the end of the course.

The sore throat should be easing by the end of the course and any pus on the tonsils will also be improving. The soreness and discharge could take a few days more to settle but will generally have eased after 7 days of COMPLETING the antibiotics.

See us again if fever has not settled by the end of the course, symptoms are worsening with difficulty swallowing saliva.

EAR INFECTIONS

There are 2 types of ear infection, inner ear (behind the ear drum) and outer ear (within the ear canal). Your doctor will have discussed this with you. Any fever should have settled by the end of the course of antibiotics. Most ear discharge will improve slowly over time and should have resolved by 10-14 days. Muffled hearing and occasional discomfort may be present with inner ear infections for a couple of weeks due to fluid behind the ear drum.

See us again if symptoms persist at 2 weeks, or sooner if, any blood-stained ear discharge, fever not settled by the end of the course, pain in the bone behind the ear (mastoid bone) or if the ear appears to be protruding.

If your GP has asked you to come back and booked a follow up appointment this will usually be necessary, even if your symptoms have settled so please do attend.



SINUS INFECTION

Most sinus problems do not require antibiotics. If your clinician has decided that you need antibiotics then you can expect the following;

Fever should settle by the end of the antibiotic course.

Nasal congestion and mucus may continue for 2-3 weeks and sometimes longer after treatment. Remember the mucus is a result of inflammation which takes a while to settle after the bacterial infection has been treated.

Facial tenderness may take 2-3 weeks to settle as the congestion clears but should not be as severe once the antibiotics are finished

Some sinus inflammation is chronic and, in this circumstance, an over-the-counter beclomethasone nasal spray may be helpful

See us again if you develop any facial swelling or blood-stained nasal discharge.

URINARY TRACT INFECTION

Generally, most urinary tract infection symptoms are settled by the end of the course of antibiotics, particularly pain. There may still be some frequency and urgency for a few days after treatment.

It is of the utmost importance that urine samples are sent to the lab for treatment to be specific.

See us again if symptoms persist beyond 7-10 days. See us again at the end of the course if severe symptoms persist or if you are passing any blood.

CELLULITIS/SKIN AND SOFT TISSUE INFECTIONS

Fever should have settled by the end of the antibiotic course. Any heat or discharge should usually have settled by the end of the course too.

Redness due to infection can persist for a while afterwards but should lighten and reduce over time. If things continue to improve slowly there is no need to see us again.

See us again if fever persists (sooner if you are feeling generally unwell), heat/redness continue to spread after 48-72 hours of antibiotics, rapidly spreading infection, pain or discharge persists at the end of the course.



BOILS/CYSTS

Most cysts do not need antibiotics and are inflamed rather than infected. It is important not to poke or squeeze them, but warm compresses can be used to bring them to the surface, and they may discharge if uncomfortable. The use of paracetamol and ibuprofen (if able to take) can also help. If your doctor has decided that you require antibiotics then your symptoms will usually start to settle by the end of the course. It is quite normal for a lump to remain where a cyst has been. This does not need ongoing antibiotics and should be left alone. It will usually disappear but can take some weeks. Poking and squeezing residual cyst lumps risks then becoming inflamed again.

See us again if your cyst is growing in size despite the antibiotics, if experiencing worsening pain. If you have recurring/multiple cysts as we may need to investigate why you are getting them.
