### Evidence based advice on RTIs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>NORMAL DURATION OF RTIs</strong></th>
<th><strong>NB: CHILDREN UNDER 5 WITH FEVER</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Otitis media: 4 days</td>
<td>• 5 days or more of fever need to be seen: AMBER risk</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Sore throat/pharyngetis/tonsillitis: 1 week</td>
<td>• 0-3 months: temp over 38 or 3-6 months over 39 need to be seen within 2 hours: RED risk</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Common cold: 1 ½ weeks</td>
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<td>• Acute rhinosinusitis: 2 ½ weeks</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Cough: 3 weeks</td>
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<th><strong>ACUTE OTITIS MEDIA</strong></th>
<th><strong>COUGH</strong></th>
<th><strong>SORE THROAT</strong></th>
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| Ear infections are very common in young children; last 4 days; painkillers main treatment unless with a discharge or under 2 years, both ears.  
• 3/4 of all children have had an ear infection by age 2  
• Commonest between 3-18 months  
• Not unusual to have up to 3 attacks a year  
• Will usually last 4 days | • 90% cough last up to 3 weeks, whether or not treated with antibiotics even if chest signs present.  
**When to seek advice**  
• Getting worse  
• Coughing up blood  
• Cough lasts for more than three to four weeks.  
• Develop chest and/or shoulder pain.  
• Difficult breathing  
• Losing weight over a period of six weeks or more  
• Voice becomes hoarse.  
• Ends of fingers take on a ‘club-like’ shape.  
• New swellings in the neck or above the collar bones. | • 90% clear within 1 week, antibiotics or not  
• Do not give antibiotics unless 3 or more Centor criteria present:  
  • Tonsillar exudates  
  • Cervical lymphadenopathy  
  • History of fever  
  • Absence of a cough  
**When to seek advice**  
• Persistent high temperature for more than three days that does not come down with ibuprofen and/or paracetamol.  
• Not getting better or that gets worse — after 4 to 5 days  
• Hard to breathe in or your throat feels like it’s closing up  
• Drooling and difficult to swallow.  
• Pain is severe and does not respond to over the counter pain killers.  
• Voice becomes muffled.  
• Difficult to drink enough fluids and become dehydrated  
• Symptoms so bad that they prevent you from functioning normally.  
• Immunocompromised (including steroids) |

**When to seek advice**  
• High temp not coming down  
• New discharge  
• Vomiting  
• Dizziness  
• Floppy  
• Lethargy  
• Severely unwell  
• Irritable  
• Unwell and still not clearing after 2-3 days  

**DELAYED PRESCRIBING OR NO PRESCRIBING STRATEGY**  
if not at risk of complications:  
• Elderly  
• Very ill  
• Co-morbidities e.g. COPD  
• Significant history