The GRIP Algorithm: Step 1 - Address the patient’s concerns

I have a cold, sore throat, earache or cough

That can be very painful and irritating. Is there anything you are finding particularly worrying or bothersome about your symptoms and how do you think I can help you?

It's just annoying and I want to know how I can get back to normal as soon as I can

Not really, but I think I need antibiotics

I understand, but is there a particular reason you think antibiotics could help you?

They worked last time I had an infection and so I think antibiotics will help

I am worried

Can you please tell me why you are worried?

Patient feels that it is severe/long-lasting/mentions complications

That's good to know. I first want to ask you about your specific symptoms (move to Step 2)
Step 2 – Be vigilant, assess severity

Please could you describe the symptoms of your sore throat/cold/earache/cough in more detail?

HCP (GP/pharmacist) asks specific Q’s with respect to duration, fever, pain and other relevant items based on the patients detailed description of their symptoms.

**PHYSICIAN:** I am going to do a physical examination.

**Worrying physical exam and/or symptoms (as per national guidelines)**

**PHARMACIST:** Is there anything in particular worrying you?

**Patient communicates worrying symptoms**

**Yes, I have (any of the following): been very unwell, diabetes, cystic fibrosis, chronic lung disease, HIV, a poor immune system**

That’s very helpful. I think it might be useful to do more checks/prescribe an antibiotic.

**No**

Do you have other health problems, like chronic diseases, or have been unwell recently, that you have not mentioned?

**No, I’m normally quite healthy**

OK. I didn’t find anything worrying in the physical examination and haven’t found risk factors in your history. Let’s see how I can help.

**No worrying symptoms and/or physical exam**

That’s very helpful. I think it might be useful to see a doctor.

You have an upper respiratory tract infection (URTI) (move to Step 3)
Step 3 - Counselling on effective symptomatic relief

URTI symptoms are caused by your immune system fighting back against the infection. As you're otherwise healthy your immune system should be strong enough to tackle it, we just need to help you get relief for your symptoms. Let’s remind ourselves of why you came to see me?

It’s just annoying and I want to know how I can get back to normal as soon as I can

I think I need antibiotics

Antibiotics don’t work in most URTIs, they won’t relieve your symptoms or make you feel better faster. Antibiotics may also cause side effects, such as diarrhoea. Can you see they may do more harm than good for you today?

I am worried about my symptoms

[Physician: your physical examination and medical history don’t not show anything to be worried about] We have discussed your symptoms so now we can look at how to relieve those symptoms

It might be good to have them just in case I don’t get better

Antibiotics should only be used when they are expected to benefit you. The more they are used, the more bacteria will become resistant to them. This could make future infections harder to treat. Are you happy that we look at how we can relieve your symptoms?

Note: Parents whose children have an URTI may need additional reassurance

Let’s see what symptomatic treatment is best for you (continue to next slide)
Step 3 – Counselling on effective symptomatic relief

URTIs can last up to 3 weeks* so it’s important that we find the right relief for you. Which are the symptoms you are finding most troublesome?

I would like something to reduce my throat pain / headache / ear pain / fever / treat my cough / unblock my nose

What type of treatment have you used before? Is there any type of treatment you prefer using?

I prefer / used [names a specific format/product]

From listening to the way you have described your symptoms, I think this type of symptomatic relief treatment would be good (Opportunity to advise continuing the preferred/used formulation or another formulation (combination). Would that suit you?

I am not sure, are there any other medicine types that might help?

Antibiotics won’t be helpful for you, so we have to find the optimal relieving treatment for you (Opportunity to advise on other formulations). Would that suit you?

Yes

Besides this treatment option make sure you take care of yourself. Drink plenty of fluids, rest and manage your symptoms with the right products to help feel better fast. If symptoms worsen, last longer than expected or new symptoms develop come back and see me.

Normal duration of URTIs: Earache – 4 days; Sore throat/tonsillitis – 1 week; Cold/flu – 10 days/2 weeks; Runny/ blocked nose – 1-3 weeks; Sinusitis – 2-3 weeks; Cough – 3 weeks