1. **ADDRESS PATIENT’S CONCERNS**

   - Ask the patient about their main symptom(s) and what they are concerned about.
   - Recognise that upper respiratory tract infections (URTIs) can be worrying and uncomfortable for patients.

2. **BE VIGILANT – ASSESS SEVERITY**

   - Most URTIs, including sore throats, are caused by viruses and resolve without antibiotics in 1-2 weeks.
   - Patients at high risk of complications, presenting with red flag symptoms or symptoms that persist without improvement, or who appear very unwell, should be seen by a doctor and may need antibiotics.

3. **COUNSEL ON EFFECTIVE SELF-MANAGEMENT**

   - Reassure the patient of the non-serious nature of most URTIs and the likely duration of symptoms.
   - Explain why antibiotics may not be needed and recommend symptomatic relief.
   - Advise the patient to seek further medical advice if symptoms last longer than expected, do not improve, or if they develop new symptoms.

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**References:**