



## Home care is best

**At Fishermead Medical Centre we are starting a campaign to make sure people are aware that they can treat themselves and their children effectively and safely for most coughs, colds, sore throats and earaches without the need for antibiotics.**

### **Why are we doing this?**

Most of you will be aware that antibiotics don't work for most coughs, colds, sore throats and earaches and this has been covered a lot in the news recently. Antibiotics can also cause side effects, like diarrhoea or sickness, and upset the 'good' bacteria in the gut. Giving antibiotics when they are not needed increases the risk of bacteria developing resistance so that they won't work when they are really necessary. This campaign is intended to empower patients to treat themselves for conditions that are 'self-limiting' and will get better in time anyway without antibiotics.

### **What will we be doing?**

We will be encouraging everyone with what are known as 'upper respiratory tract infections' to first treat themselves or their children by seeking appropriate advice from one of the local pharmacies. Although we will not be turning anyone away or calling these 'minor' illnesses, as they often don't feel very minor!

When seen in the surgery, if antibiotics are not appropriate then prescribers will give you information about how long your illness usually lasts, how to treat your symptoms with pharmacy medicines and what to do if they do not ease or get worse.

### **Delayed or back-up prescriptions**

In some circumstances, a prescription for antibiotics will be given as a 'back-up' - you will be told they are not needed but can be obtained if your condition becomes more severe. We know that only a third of such prescriptions will actually be dispensed.

Once you recover from one of these illnesses without having antibiotics then you will feel more comfortable with self-treating and less likely to request antibiotics in the future.

We know that our patients are usually very sensible but views about antibiotics can be surprisingly strongly held, particularly when a previous doctor may have given a prescription rather than explaining why they are not necessary. Please speak to reception if you would like to discuss anything further.