I've had a runny nose and thick head for a week now, do I need antibiotics?

No, it is probably a cold. Visit your pharmacist for advice as it can take up to two weeks to recover. If symptoms get much worse see your doctor.

I've had antibiotics before and I have always had them so why can't I have them this time?

We now know that antibiotics are not a magic cure and they can cause more harm than good if prescribed in the wrong circumstances. Research has now shown that overuse of antibiotics can lead to superbugs which will cause infections that are harder to treat. Your doctor will advise if antibiotics are the right treatment for you but do not expect to get them every time.

Do I have an automatic right to antibiotics?

No, it is up to your doctor to decide using their professional knowledge.
If the doctor will not prescribe me antibiotics can I take some I have in the cupboard at home from before?

Taking antibiotics unnecessarily can kill off your good bacteria that your body needs and this can lead to problems such as C. Diff and MRSA. As with all unused medicines, you should return any unused antibiotics to your pharmacy for safe disposal.

Am I not being prescribed antibiotics because the NHS is trying to save money?

No, the cost of your antibiotics is very small but overuse of antibiotics can lead to superbugs which are more difficult to treat and may require hospitalisation.
FACT! Antibiotics will not get rid of colds, most coughs and sore throats.
If you have a cold or sore throat, drink plenty of fluids, rest, and ask your pharmacist for further advice.

FACT! Antibiotics are important medicines used to treat bacterial infections.
Your doctor will always give you antibiotics if he/she thinks they can help, but do not expect to be prescribed them for a cold.

FACT! Taking antibiotics 'just in case' can kill your good bacteria...
This can make you more vulnerable to other infections. Antibiotics can also have unwanted side effects.

FACT! Taking antibiotics unnecessarily can make them less effective when you need them.
Bacteria that have become resistant to antibiotics are known as superbugs, such as C. Diff and MRSA.