

Investigating infection in abnormal vaginal discharge: quick reference tool for primary care - user guide

AIMS

This quick reference tool should provide a simple, effective, safe, economical and empirical approach to the management of abnormal vaginal discharge and help minimise the emergence of antimicrobial resistance in the community.

AUDIENCE AND TARGET GROUP

This quick reference tool is to be used by primary care prescribers in general practice and out of hours settings; including doctors, nurses and pharmacists. This includes the first points of contact for management of abnormal vaginal discharge in adults.

IMPLICATIONS

The use of this quick reference tool should lead to improved management of infection and more appropriate antibiotic use. It may also influence laboratory workload, which may have financial implications for laboratories and primary care commissioners.

PRODUCTION

This tool has been developed by UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) in consultation with the general practitioners, nurses, specialists, and patient representatives and summarizes recommendations from other national guidance including **BASHH**, **CKS** and **NICE**.

The tool is not all-encompassing, as it is meant to be 'quick reference'. Clinicians should ultimately rely on their clinical judgement and use with other recommended resources. If more detail is required, we suggest referral to the websites and references cited.

Updates based on new developments or user feedback will be raised to the steering group quarterly (or sooner if needed) and a change note made if an update is indicated. There will be a full review every 5 years.

LOCAL ADAPTATION AND FEEDBACK

We would discourage major changes to the guidance, but the format allows minor changes to suit local service delivery and sampling protocols. To create ownership agreement on the guidance locally, dissemination should be agreed and planned at the local level between primary care clinicians, laboratories and secondary care providers.

We welcome opinions on the advice given. Please email any evidence or references that support your requests for change so that we may consider them. Comments should be submitted to TARGET Antibiotics Toolkit Team, 4th Floor, Twyver House, Bruton Way, Gloucester, GL1 1DQ or email: TARGETAntibiotics@ukhsa.gov.uk

ENDORSEMENTS

The quick reference tool is endorsed by:



**British Association for
Sexual Health and HIV**



TARGET

Keep Antibiotics Working

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GUIDANCE USED TO CREATE THIS FLOWCHART

This quick reference tool summarizes the recommendations from national and international guidance specific to this topic. For a version with reference citations, please email TARGETAntibiotics@ukhsa.gov.uk

The following national guidelines and references were used:

1. Edwards SK, Bates CM, Lewis F, Sethi G, Grover D. 2014 UK national guideline on the management of vulval conditions. Int J STD AIDS. 2015;26(9):611-624. Weblink: http://www.bashguidelines.org/media/1056/vulval-conditions_2014-ijstda.pdf
2. Saxon Lead Author GDGC, Edwards A, Rautemaa-Richardson R, et al. British Association for Sexual Health and HIV national guideline for the management of vulvovaginal candidiasis (2019). Int J STD AIDS. 2020;31(12):1124-1144. Weblink: <https://www.bashguidelines.org/media/1223/vvc-2019.pdf>
3. British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH). UK national guideline for the management of bacterial vaginosis (2012). Weblink: <https://www.bashguidelines.org/media/1041/bv-2012.pdf>
4. Sherrard J, Pitt R, Hobbs KR, et al. British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH) United Kingdom national guideline on the management of Trichomonas vaginalis 2021. Int J STD AIDS. 2022;33(8):740-750. Weblink: https://www.bashguidelines.org/media/1042/tv_2014-ijstda.pdf
5. Fifer H, Saunders J, Suneeta S, Sadiq S, FitzGerald M. British Association for Sexual Health and HIV national guideline for the management of infection with Neisseria gonorrhoeae. 2019 Jan. Weblink: <https://www.bashguidelines.org/media/1208/gc-2019.pdf>
6. Nwokolo NC, Dragovic B, Patel S, Tong CY, Barker G, Radcliffe K. 2015 UK national guideline for the management of infection with Chlamydia trachomatis. Int J STD AIDS. 2016 Feb; 27(4):251-267. Weblink: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0956462415615443>
7. British Association for Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH). Standards for the management of sexually transmitted infections (STIs). 2019. Weblink: <https://bashh.org/media/4429/bashh-standards-for-sti-management-2019.pdf>
8. 2018 European (IUSTI/WHO) International Union against sexually transmitted infections (IUSTI) World Health Organisation (WHO) guideline on the management of vaginal discharge. Weblink: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0956462418785451>
9. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE). Vaginal discharge. Clinical Knowledge Summaries (CKS). Vaginal discharge. 2018 August. Weblink: <https://cks.nice.org.uk/vaginal-discharge>
10. UK Standards for Microbiology Investigations. Investigation of Genital Tract and Associated Specimens (2017). Weblink: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/611011/B_28i4.6.pdf

AUTHORS AND REVIEWERS

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