

## Antibiotic prescription screening and counselling sheet User Guide

### Summary

The Antibiotic screening and counselling sheet is a supporting tool to help inform the information clinicians provide to patients, including how to take antibiotics and their common side effects. It also summarises information to support pharmacy teams and other healthcare professionals when clinically screening antibiotic prescriptions (for example interactions and pregnancy/breast feeding considerations).

### Who should this be used by?

This resource has been developed in mind for community pharmacy teams to support their existing processes when checking the safety of prescribed antibiotics and counselling patients. It has been designed to support the [TARGET Antibiotic Checklist](#) by summarising key information for common antibiotics. As it summarises information about antibiotics it may be suitable to be used by other healthcare professionals across England and Wales.

### What are the aims of the prescription screening and counselling sheet?

This resource aims to summarise information from the British National Formulary (BNF) and Electronic Medicines Compendium (EMC). These tables can be used to support clinical screening of antibiotic prescriptions and when providing antibiotic adherence advice to patients and support shared decision making in healthcare settings, in line with [NICE Guideline \[NG197\]](#).

### Why create the antibiotic counselling sheet?

This resource was developed to facilitate use of the [TARGET Antibiotic Checklist](#) in community pharmacy. The sections in this sheet correspond with the questions and checklist points, to aid healthcare professionals when prescribing, clinically assessing and/or dispensing antibiotic prescriptions.

### Development

This was a collaboration between Public Health Wales and the TARGET Antibiotics toolkit team within UK Health Security Agency. This sheet summarises key information from the British National Formulary (BNF) and Electronic Medicines Compendium (EMC) but is not an exhaustive list. The tool was developed in collaboration between pharmacists and the Welsh Medicines Advice service and reviewed by stakeholders in other agencies.

### Limitations

This tool is designed to support healthcare professionals and may not account for individual circumstances of patients, nor is it a complete replication of the information. It should not be used as sole basis for decision making, nor replace healthcare professional consultations.

This information is up to date at point of publication, the British National Formulary (BNF) and Electronic Medicines Compendium (EMC) should be reviewed for the most up to date information.

### Local adaptation and considerations

This tool is not all-encompassing. Clinicians should rely on their clinical judgement and use it alongside other professional resources. If more detail is needed, we suggest referring to the websites and references cited.

This resource was developed for application in England and Wales. We would discourage major changes to the tool, but the format allows minor changes to suit local service delivery and sampling protocols.

To create ownership agreement on any resources which are adapted for local use, dissemination should be agreed and planned at the local level between primary care clinicians, laboratories and secondary care providers.

While every care has been taken in the preparation of this resource, UKHSA and the partner organisations shall, to the greatest extent possible under any applicable law, exclude liability for all losses, costs, claims, damages or expenses arising out of or connected with the use of this resource or any information contained within it.

If alterations are made by an end user to this resource for local use, it must be made clear within the amended document where the alterations have been made and by whom. It should also be acknowledged that UKHSA and the partner organisations shall bear no liability for such alterations.

The evidence base and expert consensus recommendations are as complete as possible at the date of issue. Any omissions and new material will be considered at the next review.

### Review process

The counselling sheet will be reviewed every three years but will be reviewed sooner if there are significant changes to guidelines before the review date. This will be led by Public Health Wales and the TARGET Antibiotics team at UKHSA.

Please ensure you are using the most up to date version of this tool published on the TARGET website.

### Overview of the resource

#### General advice / managing side effects

Important standard advice to share with all patients when taking antibiotics.

Advice on actions patients can take to mitigate and treat common side effects.

##### General advice:

- Take doses at regular intervals throughout the day.
- Take antibiotics exactly as prescribed. Never save them for future use. Never share them with others.
- If you don't start to feel better within a few days of starting antibiotics, contact your prescriber for advice.
- Return unused antibiotics for safe disposal. Do not dispose of down sinks, toilets or in the bin.

##### Managing common side effects

Bloating/indigestion: Eat smaller meals and eat/drink slowly. Try to avoid lentils, beans, peas and onions.

Diarrhoea: Drink plenty of water or squash to avoid dehydration.

Mild stomach cramps: Eat/drink slowly and have smaller, more frequent meals. Rest and try to relax. Try placing heat pads/hot water bottle on the stomach.

Mild skin reactions/allergy: Try using an emollient cream, gentle, fragrance-free moisturiser, or an antihistamine.

Mild headaches: Rest and drink plenty of water or squash. Avoid alcohol. Paracetamol/ibuprofen may help if appropriate.

Nausea: Avoid rich/spicy foods. Some antibiotics can be taken with or after food to ease symptoms.

Vomiting: Take small, frequent sips of water or squash to avoid dehydration.

## Counselling points

Important information to share with patients around adherence and instructions around food and alcohol

## Common side effects

It may not be necessary to share all with patients, but it is particularly important to inform patients about side effects where they may need to mitigate effects e.g. sun exposure. When providing information on side effects, share safety netting information and when and where patients should seek help if concerned about side effects.

## Cautions and severe interactions

Non-exhaustive list of cautions and interactions for common antibiotics. These should be considered when prescribing, clinically screening and/or dispensing the prescription.

Antibiotic	Information to support counselling patients		Information to support clinical assessment		
	Counselling points	Common Side Effects	Cautions*	Severe Interactions*	Pregnancy and Breastfeeding
<b>Amoxicillin</b>	<p><b>How to take:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take with or without food</li> <li>Alcohol in moderation is unlikely to cause problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nausea</li> <li>Vomiting</li> <li>Diarrhoea</li> <li>Skin rashes/allergy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Risk of convulsions in patients with impaired renal function, those receiving high doses or those with predisposing factors (e.g. history of seizures, treated epilepsy or meningeal disorders)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased risk of methotrexate toxicity- manufacturer advises monitoring</li> <li>May affect INR in patients on warfarin. Oral anticoagulant dose changes may be necessary</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pregnancy:</b> Not known to be harmful</p> <p><b>Breastfeeding:</b> Trace amount in milk but appropriate to use</p>
<b>Clarithromycin</b>	<p><b>How to take:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take with or without food</li> <li>Alcohol in moderation is unlikely to cause problems</li> </ul> <p><b>Monitoring/ points to note:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In individuals with hepatic impairment, if signs of hepatic disease occur e.g. anorexia, jaundice, dark urine, itchy skin or tender abdomen, discontinue and contact doctor</li> <li>Monitor glucose levels with concurrent sulfonylureas/insulin - can cause hypoglycaemia.</li> <li>Withhold statins during antibiotic course</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Nausea</li> <li>Vomiting</li> <li>Stomach cramps</li> <li>Diarrhoea</li> <li>Dyspepsia</li> <li>Altered sense of taste</li> <li>Insomnia</li> <li>Headache</li> <li>Rash, hyperhidrosis</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarithromycin prolongs the QT interval -consult SmPC for relevant contra-indications, cautions and interactions associated with QT prolongation</li> <li>With impaired hepatic function or with potentially hepatotoxic drugs</li> <li>With concomitant oral hypoglycaemics or insulin.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarithromycin is an inhibitor of drug metabolism -check SmPC for clinically-significant interactions</li> <li>Caution with medicines that are mainly metabolised by CYP3A4 (some are contraindicated)</li> <li>Medicines that are inducers of CYP3A (e.g. rifampicin, phenytoin, carbamazepine, phenobarbital, St. John's wort) may induce the metabolism of clarithromycin</li> </ul>	<p><b>Pregnancy:</b> Manufacturer advises avoid, particularly in the first trimester, unless potential benefit outweighs risk</p> <p><b>Breastfeeding:</b> Manufacturer advises avoid unless potential benefit outweighs risk—present in milk</p>

## Pregnancy and breastfeeding

Safety considerations that should be considered when prescribing, clinically screening and/or dispensing the prescription.

## Other useful resources

Please consider using the TARGET patient information leaflets on common infections, (available at: <https://www.rcgp.org.uk/TARGET-patient-leaflets>) to support Antimicrobial Stewardship.

We are happy to receive feedback about how you have used this resource and any constructive comments on how it can be improved. Please contact us at [TARGETantibiotics@ukhsa.gov.uk](mailto:TARGETantibiotics@ukhsa.gov.uk).