

Summary of antimicrobial prescribing guidance – managing common infections

Appendix: update to content

April 2025

The following topics have had their content updated:

1. The table summary row and corresponding web text for Recurrent UTI have been updated according to changes in NICE guidelines (NG112).

December 2024

The following topics have had their content updated:

2. The table summary row and corresponding web text for Recurrent UTI have been marked as “under review” until updates are made based on the changes to NICE guidelines (NG112).

September 2024

The following topics have had their content updated:

1. Infections with Quinolones recommended have been updated based on latest NICE guidance. This includes changes to:
 - a) NG19 Diabetic foot problems (diabetic foot infection)
 - b) NG110 Acute prostatitis
 - c) NG111 Acute pyelonephritis
 - d) NG113 Catheter-associated UTI
 - e) NG114 COPD acute exacerbation
 - f) NG117 Bronchiectasis acute exacerbation
 - g) NG138 Community-acquired pneumonia
 - h) NG139 Hospital-acquired pneumonia
 - i) NG147 Diverticular disease (acute diverticulitis)
2. Text mirroring the content in the table was published on the TARGET toolkit

April 2024

The following topics have had their content updated:

1. The table links for sexually transmitted infections have been updated

January 2024

The following topics have had their content updated:

1. The table text includes information about the MHRA alert on quinolones

June 2023

The following topics have had their content updated:

1. The table summaries were moved from the BNF to the TARGET toolkit
2. Rows with content that was not supported by NICE antimicrobial prescribing guidance were removed

3. Hyperlinks to other guidance to refer to were included in the table summaries as well as on the TARGET toolkit website

February 2023

The following topics have had their content updated:

1. Acute Sore Throat and Scarlet Fever guidance updated to reflect lowering rates of Group A Strep infections

December/January 2022-23

The following topics have had their content updated:

1. NICE and UKHSA updated content around acute sore throat and scarlet fever based on changing national guidance

July 2021

1. Tables were moved to publication on the British National Formulary website

The following topics have had their content updated:

1. NICE added Covid-19 guidance summary to the table
2. NICE updated the content of the Clostridium Diff. row based on their newly published APG
3. NICE updated the content for Acne based on their newly published APG

May 2021

The following topics have had their content updated:

1. Eczema

November 2020

The following topics have had their content updated:

2. Human and animal bites

February 2020

The following new topics have been added to the table:

1. Acute diverticulitis
2. Impetigo (replaces PHE guidance from Nov 2017)
3. Leg ulcer infection (replaces PHE guidance from Feb 2019)

The following topics have had updates to their content:

1. Acute sore throat: wording added about course length of phenoxymethylpenicillin
2. Lower urinary tract infection: wording added about people with symptoms of pyelonephritis or a complicated UTI
3. Acute pyelonephritis: wording added about avoiding antibiotics that don't achieve adequate levels in renal tissue
4. Lyme disease: wording on prophylaxis removed

October 2019

The following new topics have been added to the table:

1. Cellulitis and erysipelas (replaced PHE guidance from October 2018)

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2. Diabetic foot infection

The following topics have had updates to their content:

1. Acute sore throat: wording added to further explain phenoxymethylpenicillin duration
2. Acute otitis externa: wording added about safety of neomycin and corticosteroid drops
3. Acute exacerbation of COPD: minor wording changes to reflect new restrictions and precautions for the use of fluoroquinolone antibiotics
4. Acute exacerbation of bronchiectasis (non-cystic fibrosis): minor wording changes to reflect new restrictions and precautions for the use of fluoroquinolone antibiotics
5. Acute prostatitis: minor wording changes to reflect new restrictions and precautions for the use of fluoroquinolone antibiotics
6. Helicobacter pylori: minor wording changes to reflect new restrictions and precautions for the use of fluoroquinolone antibiotics

July 2019

The following topics were added to the table:

1. Acute exacerbation of bronchiectasis (non-cystic fibrosis)
2. A warning on fluoroquinolone use based on latest MHRA recommendations was included on the website, summary tables, and reference/rationale document
3. Changes to treatment recommendations will be noted in the next update (expected Autumn 2019)

The following topics have had updates to their content:

Urinary Tract Infection

1. NICE have included an additional dosing option for Nitrofurantoin under lower and catheter associated UTI

Prevention of secondary cases of meningitis

1. Added in the contact number for expert advice on the management of clusters of meningitis

Chlamydia

1. Clarified wording around who needs to be tested for re-infection in the key points section (added under 25 years or at high risk of re-infection)
2. Clarified how long clinician needs to advise the patient to avoid sexual intercourse for each condition (chlamydia, urethritis, M.genitalium)

Bites

1. Included + in the treatment headings for human and animal bites
2. Took out the recommendation for ceftriaxone in women who are pregnant and have a rash after penicillin. This recommendation will be discussed by the review team and included in the next update.

Conjunctivitis

1. Clarified use of chloramphenicol eye once at night only when using drops during the day

February 2019

The following topics were removed and covered by the new PHE/NICE

guidance in the table:

1. Acute cough and bronchitis

The following topics have had updates to their content:

Influenza

1. Frequency of diskhaler use clarified

Suspected meningococcal disease

1. Cefotaxime removed as an option for treatment and NICE 2010 reference updated

Helicobacter Pylori

1. Changes made to align with other national treatment guidelines
2. Relapse and no penicillin allergy treatment clarified
3. Relapse and penicillin allergy with and without quinolone exposure clarified
4. First line treatment category clarified in medicine column
5. Relapse and metronidazole and clarithromycin previously clarified
6. 10-day treatment option for relapse removed

Chlamydia

1. Updated references and guidance to reflect newly published guidelines for Mycoplasma genitalium and 2018 update for treatment of Chlamydia
2. Added text about increased resistance for M. genitalium
3. Added rationale for change to doxycycline first line for Chlamydia
4. Added statement to abstain from sexual intercourse for 7 days after treatment with doxycycline
5. Added statement that if M. genitalium is proven use doxycycline followed by azithromycin using the same dosing regimen
6. Clarified use of azithromycin as second line treatment or for women who are pregnant or breastfeeding, or patients with an intolerance/allergy
7. Added new updated BASHH references Chlamydia, M. genitalium

Neisseria gonorrhoeae (NG)

1. Updated based on new guidance published in January 2019
2. Clarified use of ciprofloxacin only if susceptibility is known
3. Use ceftriaxone if susceptibility isn't known and increased dose to 1000mg IM
4. Updated BASHH reference for NG added to rationale section

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease (PID)

1. Updated based on new guidance published in January 2019
2. First line therapy updated to ceftriaxone plus metronidazole plus doxycycline
3. Dose of ceftriaxone increased to 1000mg IM
4. Second line therapy updated to metronidazole plus ofloxacin or moxifloxacin alone
5. Moxifloxacin indicated as first line treatment for M. genitalium
6. Reference updated to align with new BASHH treatment guidance for PID

Leg Ulcer

1. Added in statement that antibiotics can be continued for a further 7 days if slow response to treatment

Dermatophyte infection: Skin

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1. Added in a statement to clarify the use of terbinafine as compared to fungistatic imidazoles or undecenoates
2. Clarified that undecenoates are an alternative treatment for athlete's foot

July 2019

The following topics were added to the table:

Acute exacerbation of bronchiectasis (non-cystic fibrosis)

A warning on fluoroquinolone use based on latest MHRA recommendations was included on the website, summary tables, and reference/rationale document. Changes to treatment recommendations will be noted in the next update (expected Autumn 2019)

The following topics have had updates to their content:

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1. Clarified wording around who needs to be tested for re-infection in the key points section (added under 25 years or at high risk of re-infection)
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Bites

1. Included + in the treatment headings for human and animal bites
2. Took out the recommendation for ceftriaxone in women who are pregnant and have a rash after penicillin. This recommendation will be discussed by the review team and included in the next update.

Conjunctivitis

1. Clarified use of chloramphenicol eye once at night only when using drops during the day

December 2018

The following topics were removed and covered by the new PHE/NICE guidance in the table:

1. Acute exacerbation of COPD

The following topics have had updates to their content:

1. The references and rational document produced by PHE had the COPD references removed

October 2018

General:

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1. The tables now consist of two documents – one joint table on the NICE website where NICE support content from their guidance and PHE support content from the previous table. PHE aims, forward, and rationales now in a separate document on PHE website.
2. Title, Aims and Forward changed to reflect new working relationship with NICE
3. Contact links changed to the TARGET web address
4. Address updated

Principles of treatment (now in the PHE reference and rationale document):

1. Statement on sepsis added (now pt 4)
2. Statement on immunocompromised added (now pt 5)
3. Statement on topical antibiotics added (now pt 10)
4. Statement on the 2017/19 QP added
5. Statement on delayed antibiotics taken out (UTI covered by NICE) (prev pt 4)
6. Statement on severe or recurrent cases has been taken out (prev pt 12)
7. Statement about nitrofurantoin and trimethoprim use in pregnancy taken out (prev pt 13)
8. Statement about children's doses taken out (prev pt 16)

The following topics were removed and will be covered by the new NICE guidance in the table:

1. Acute Sore Throat
2. Acute Otitis Media
3. Sinusitis
4. Urinary Tract Infections

Scarlet Fever

1. Statement on analgesia and safety netting added
2. Updated references for PHE and CKS
3. Clarified use of Clarithromycin for 5 days vs 7 days in rationale

Meningitis

1. Updated reference

Helicobacter Pylori

1. Link to PHE quick reference flowchart included
2. Statement to always test before giving antibiotics included

Infectious Diarrhoea

1. Inclusion of treatment with timidazole recommended for giardia included and addition of Ordonez-Mena reference from 2017.

Traveller's Diarrhoea

1. Updated the CDC and CKS rationales

Chlamydia

1. Clarified wording around re-testing
2. Updated PHE reference

Vaginal candidiasis

1. Percentage corrected
2. Added feticonazole as a treatment option (BASHH 2007).
3. Added clotrimazole as a 6-night treatment option (BASHH 2007)
4. Clarified wording around 7-day course of treatment in pregnancy

Pelvic Inflammatory Disease

1. Updated the BASHH reference
2. Now recommending oral moxifloxacin as a treatment option

Acne

1. Provided more information in the rationale of the Purdy reference

Cellulitis

1. The recommendation to use clindamycin to un-resolving cases was taken out
2. Brindle BMJ open 2017 reference added

Bites

1. Clarification provided around prophylactic antibiotic use in penicillin allergy and pregnancy
2. Morgan 2007 BMJ reference added

Scabies

1. Reference Sashidharan 2016 BASHH added
2. Permethrin use and application clarified in good practice point boxes

Varicella zoster

1. Use of paracetamol for pain relief clarified and reference added

Conjunctivitis

1. Use of ointment at night clarified in dose column

Lyme's Disease

1. Section added based on reviewed conducted in 2017