

Prescribing and Medicines Optimisation Guidance

Issue 90

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World Antimicrobial Resistance Awareness Week (WAAW)

#WAAW 18th - 24th November 2023

The theme for WAAW 2023 will remain "**Preventing antimicrobial resistance together**", as in 2022. AMR is a threat to humans, animals, plants and the environment; it affects us all.



That is why this year's theme calls for cross-sectoral collaboration to preserve the effectiveness of antimicrobials. To effectively reduce AMR, all sectors must use antimicrobials prudently and appropriately, take preventive measures to decrease the incidence of infections and follow good practices in disposal of antimicrobial contaminated waste.

Whether you intend on supporting a small or big campaign, all antimicrobial stewardship efforts help to keep antibiotics working; so please do what you can to get involved during and beyond WAAW 2023.

1. [Educate patients by displaying the NHS England “Awareness of AMR Animation”](#)

- **Add this video to your website and/or social media page(s)** and ask your patients to "Click to find out about antibiotics and how to stop us going back to the Stone Age!" We are also asking if practices can display this on their waiting rooms TV screens where possible to increase patient education aiming to reduce their expectation for antibiotics ([LINK](#)).



2. Shortest Effective Course Length for Antibiotics Campaign (LINK)

➤ Review these snippets from the campaign's Evidence Bundle ([LINK](#)):

Each additional day of antibiotic therapy is associated with a 4% increase in risk of side effects; comparing 7-day course vs 3-day course there was found to be a 19% increase in odds ratio of adverse events with the 7-day course¹.

Unnecessarily long courses of antimicrobials are one of the factors driving antimicrobial resistance and an increased risk of *Clostridioides difficile* infection in at-risk populations.

Antibiotic course durations have often been based on a seemingly arbitrary and weak evidential basis^{2,3}.

With antimicrobial resistance recognised as a global threat to public health, reducing course lengths when the evidence demonstrates that this not only does no harm but is potentially safer for the patient^{4,5}.

Antimicrobials should only be used when they confer health benefits; when the risk benefit ratio falls in favour of treatment.

➤ Refresh your knowledge on which common five conditions can be treated for 5 days:

5 DAYS FOR 5 INFECTIONS (ADULTS)

Sore Throat (if antibiotic indicated) Phenoxymethylpenicillin 500mg four times a day for 5 days for symptomatic cure OR clarithromycin 250mg to 500mg twice a day for 5 days OR erythromycin 250mg to 500mg four times a day for 5 days

COPD (acute infective exacerbation) Amoxicillin 500mg three times a day for 5 days OR doxycycline 200mg day 1 and then 100mg daily on days 2-5 OR clarithromycin 500mg twice a day for 5 days

Acute Cough (if antibiotic indicated) Doxycycline 200mg day 1 then 100mg daily on days 2-5 OR amoxicillin 500mg three times a day for 5 days OR clarithromycin 250mg to 500mg twice a day for 5 days OR erythromycin 250mg to 500mg four times a day or 500mg to 1g twice a day for 5 days

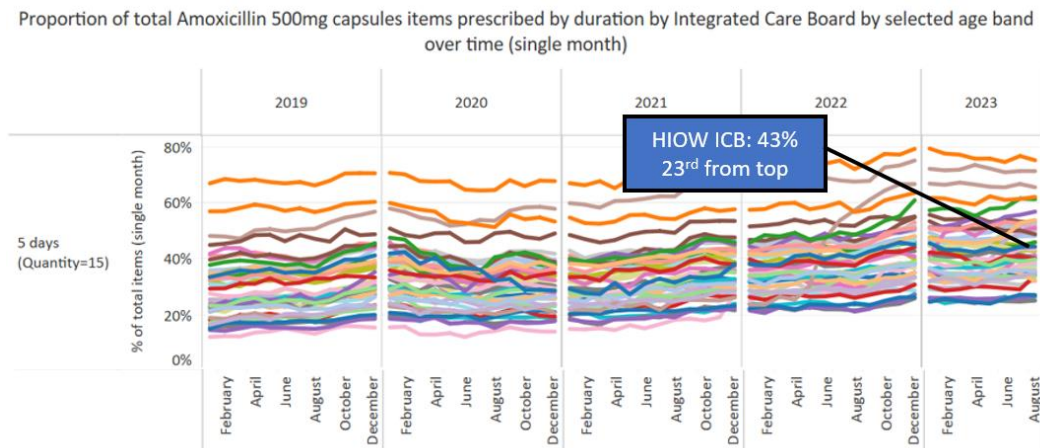
Community Acquired Pneumonia Amoxicillin 500mg to 1g three times a day for 5 days OR doxycycline 200mg on day 1, then 100mg daily on days 2-5 OR clarithromycin 500mg twice a day for 5 days OR erythromycin (in pregnancy) 500mg four times a day for 5 days

Acute Sinusitis (if antibiotic indicated) Phenoxymethylpenicillin 500mg four times a day for 5 days OR if systemically very unwell co-amoxiclav 500/125mg 1 three times a day for 5 days OR for penicillin allergy doxycycline 200mg on day 1, then 100mg daily on days 2-5 OR clarithromycin 500mg twice a day for 5 days OR erythromycin (in pregnancy) 500mg four times a day for 5 days

5 | NICE RECOMMENDED FIRST LINE ANTIBIOTIC TREATMENT (CHECKED APRIL 2023)

➤ **Explore the data for shorter courses in amoxicillin ([LINK](#))**

The graph below shows the percentage of amoxicillin 500mg capsules with a 5 day course length across England. Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB is sitting 23rd from top of all 42 ICBs in terms of the highest number of 5 day treatments being issued; however there is still a way to go with a national target of 75% of all amoxicillin 500mg capsules as five days treatment.



3. Learning

➤ **RCGP webinars for WAAW 2023**

Sign up for the three free webinars taking place in 2023/4 ([LINK](#))

- I. Acne and COPD exacerbation: Reviewing patients on long term and repeat antibiotics
Wednesday 22nd **November** 2023
- II. Improving antibiotic management of respiratory tract infections: cough and sore throat
Tuesday 23rd **January** 2024
- III. Urinary tract infections: Applying diagnostic and prescribing guidance in practice - -
Thursday 21st **March** 2024

➤ **UTI Quiz**

Take the RCGP TARGET Toolkit UTI quiz which based on the TARGET UTI rapid update quiz PowerPoint presentation. ([LINK](#))

➤ **Back-up (or delayed) prescribing**

Watch the TARGET webinar [29 mins] to help recognise when back-up prescriptions are appropriate, how to explain them to patients and learn different ways to issue them ([LINK](#)).

When discussing back-up/delayed prescriptions with patients, it can be helpful for them to understand the reasons for giving it, for example the patient is more likely to experience side effects of antibiotics rather than the benefits, and to be specific about the number of days to wait before starting an antibiotic if they are not feeling any better. Quick reading here ([LINK](#)). However, immediate prescriptions should be given for severe infections or those who are immunocompromised; or emergency referral if sepsis is suspected.

Resources

1 [NHS Hampshire and Isle of Wight ICB: Antimicrobial Stewardship Webpage](#)

Visit our new website which includes all the resources for WAAW 2023, as well as a [Practice AMS action plan](#) which can be used as evidence in CQC visits.

2 [South Central Antimicrobial Network \(SCAN\) guidelines](#)

Please consider bookmarking the local SCAN guidelines link on your computer. These are also available to download on mobile devices via the MicroGuide app [['How to' guide available here](#): install the MicroGuide app (Horizon Strategic Partners Ltd) and then select the 'South Central Antimicrobial Guidelines']

3 [AccuRx: How to send TARGET patient leaflets](#)

TARGET leaflets can be printed from the TARGET website but a link to a 'mobile-friendly' version can be sent to patients via AccuRx.

4 [UKHSA Antibiotic Awareness: WAAW toolkit for healthcare professionals in England](#)

Many resources are available to help raise awareness of good antimicrobial stewardship. They can be found via the link in the WAAW resource toolkit including posters, leaflets, quizzes and digital resources. The link also includes resources from previous campaigns (Antibiotic Guardian: Keep Antibiotics Working (2019)). We encourage you to [choose your pledge and register your organisation's activities](#) in support of the national initiatives.

5 [TARGET \(Royal College of General Practitioners \(RCGP\)\) Antibiotics toolkit](#)

TARGET stands for: Treat Antibiotics Responsibly, Guidance, Education, Tools. This RCGP digital toolkit helps influence prescribers' and patients' personal attitudes, social norms and perceived barriers to optimal antibiotic prescribing. It includes a range of resources that can each be used to support prescribers' and patients' responsible antibiotic use, helping to fulfil CPD and revalidation requirements. The toolkit also includes posters and videos for clinical waiting areas and patient information leaflets, particularly relevant during 18th – 24th November.

6 [Antibiotic and Diagnostic Quick Reference Tools](#)

TARGET have summarised the available antibiotic and diagnostic quick reference tools from NICE, CKS and BASHH.

References

1. Curran J, Lo J, Leung V, Garber G, Wu JHC, Langford BJ. Estimating daily antibiotic harms: an umbrella review with individual study meta-analysis. *Clinical Microbiology and Infection*. 2021. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cmi.2021.10.022> (accessed on 20.10.23)
 2. [The Maxwell Finland Lecture: for the duration-rational antibiotic administration in an era of antimicrobial resistance and clostridium difficile - PubMed \(nih.gov\)](#)
 3. [The New Antibiotic Mantra—"Shorter Is Better" - PMC \(nih.gov\)](#)
 4. [Antibiotic resistance as big a threat as climate change – chief medic | Antibiotics | The Guardian](#)
 5. [Antimicrobial resistance: a global threat | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#)
 6. [Shorter Is Better | mysite \(bradspellberg.com\)](#)
 7. [Doctor group advises shorter antibiotic course for common infections | CIDRAP \(umn.edu\)](#)
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Previous bulletins can be found at: <https://www.hantsiowhealthandcare.org.uk/your-health/medicines-optimisation/information-health-care-professionals/hlow-medicines-optimisation-bulletins>