

Medicines Matters

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Clostridioides difficile infection treatment options

The NICE guideline [NG199] on antimicrobial prescribing for *Clostridioides difficile* (*C. difficile*) infection in adults, young people, and children aged 3 days and over sets out an antimicrobial prescribing strategy aiming to optimise antibiotic use and reduce antibiotic resistance. [Overview](#) | [Clostridioides difficile infection: antimicrobial prescribing](#) | [Guidance](#) | [NICE](#)

NICE guidance on *C. difficile* Infection treatment options for adults aged 18 years and over

- First line for first episode of mild, moderate, or severe *C. difficile* infection: **Vancomycin** 125mg orally four times a day for 10 days
- Second line (used if first line is ineffective) for first episode of mild, moderate, or severe *C. difficile* infection: **Fidaxomicin** 200mg orally twice a day for 10 days.
- Further episode of *C. difficile* infection **within 12 weeks** of symptom resolution (relapse): **Fidaxomicin** 200mg orally twice a day for 10 days
- Further episode of *C. difficile* infection **more than 12 weeks** after symptom resolution (recurrence): **Vancomycin** 125mg orally four times a day for 10 days **OR** **Fidaxomicin** 200mg orally twice a day for 10 days

Refer to the British National Formulary (BNF) for appropriate use in specific populations, for example, hepatic impairment, renal impairment, pregnancy, and breastfeeding at the following link [BNF](#). Refer to the NICE Guideline NG199 for treatment advice in children and young people under 18 years at the following link [NICE NG199](#)

- *C. difficile* infection needs prompt treatment as it can lead to more serious infections of the intestines with severe inflammation of the bowel (pseudomembranous colitis). It is therefore important that treatment is started without delay.
- Fidaxomicin is NOT routinely stocked in community pharmacies as it is a high-cost item. Following receipt of a prescription, the community pharmacy must order this urgently via Alliance healthcare, a standard wholesaler.
- Community pharmacies have recently been sent a letter to stress the importance of ordering this medication in urgently and to give them advice on how to order during usual pharmacy opening hours and how to use the emergency ordering service outside of usual opening hours. **For further details refer to the Lancashire and South Cumbria ICB formulary and view the Fidaxomicin letter to community pharmacies.** Link to formulary [Lancashire and South Cumbria Formulary](#)

Fidaxomicin is LSCMMG rated as GREEN Restricted: suitable for prescribing in primary care following advice from Microbiology for the treatment of *Clostridioides difficile* infection in line with NICE Guideline, NG199.

Community pharmacies can order Fidaxomicin urgently following receipt of a prescription. To ensure prompt treatment, it is advisable to liaise with the patient's named pharmacy as soon as possible to alert them about the prescription. Urge the patient or carer to promptly notify the GP surgery if they are struggling to obtain it from local pharmacies.