Prescribing tip number: 414 Date: 13th October 2023



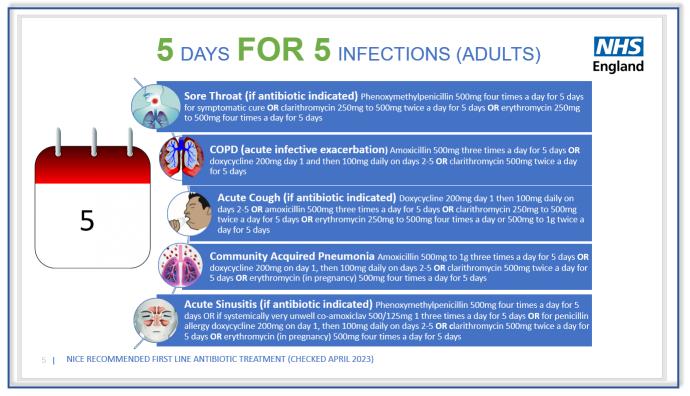


**Prescribing Tip For Information** 

## 5-day course length for common infections in adults

Research increasingly demonstrates that short courses of antibiotics are as effective as longer courses in treating patients with uncomplicated infections. Reflecting this evidence, for common infections, <u>NICE guidance</u> routinely recommends the shortest effective course of treatment, to reduce selection pressure for antimicrobial resistance and inadvertent patient harm from antibiotic treatment. (1)

Five-day courses are recommended when antibiotics are indicated for: Sore throat, COPD (acute infective exacerbation), cough (acute), pneumonia (community-acquired) and sinusitis (acute). (2) (3)



## **Key Points:**

- > Antibiotics should be prescribed as recommended in NICE primary care guidelines
- Prescribing the NICE recommended dose and course length is safe and effective.
- > Evidence supports 5-day course length treatment for most common infections in primary care.
- Avoiding prolonged durations of antibiotic therapy means fewer side effects and reduces the risk of antibiotic resistance.
- ➤ Acute otitis media NICE recommended course length is 5 7 days and suitable for 5-day course where clinically appropriate.

## NHSE aims for ≥ 75% of total amoxicillin 500 mg prescriptions as 5-day courses by March 2024 (1)

Current local position: 63% (Preston) and 58% (Chorley & South Ribble) of Amoxicillin 500mg capsule prescriptions are issued as 5-day courses (data: Aug 22 – Jul 23). This compares favourably to the L&SC ICB average (48%) however there is room for improvement to achieve the NHSE aim.

## References:

- 1. NHS England. National medicines optimisation opportunities 2023/24. 31st July 2023
- 2. NICE / UKHSA: Summary of antimicrobial prescribing guidelines managing common infections. June 2023
- 3. Infographic produced by NHS South East regional Medicines Optimisation Committee's Antimicrobial Prescribing & Medicines Optimisation. July 2023. Shared with permission.