Action 2: Use *Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic*\(^1\)

Prescribing guidelines for antimicrobials are a fundamental component of an antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) program because they guide the appropriate use of antimicrobials.

*Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic*\(^1\) is prepared by an expert group of experienced clinicians, and represents the best available evidence and opinion regarding treatment and prophylaxis for infections in Australia.

Prescribers should use *Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic*\(^1\) when prescribing antimicrobials, and these should be readily accessible to clinicians wherever antimicrobials are being prescribed.

Health care organisations should have antimicrobial prescribing guidelines that take into consideration the advice in *Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic,*\(^1\) reflect common infections relevant to the patient population, the local antimicrobial susceptibilities, and the procedures being performed. They should specify recommended agent(s), dose, route and duration of antimicrobial treatment. Guidance for switching from intravenous to oral therapy should also be available. Local guidelines should be regularly reviewed and updated in consultation with key clinicians to ensure best practice is upheld.\(^2\)

For conditions not covered by *Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic,*\(^1\) organisations should refer to the best available evidence, seek expert guidance from infectious disease (ID) specialists, microbiologists and pharmacists, and consult relevant professional associations and colleges.

A lack of awareness about local and national resources that support antimicrobial prescribing has been identified as a barrier to appropriate prescribing.\(^3\) Organisations can promote adherence to prescribing guidelines by ensuring that they are readily accessible such as via the organisation’s intranet, and by informing prescribers of their availability.\(^4\) Embedding guidelines into clinical decision support systems and electronic prescribing systems increases guideline uptake and concordance, and provides further opportunity to guide appropriate prescribing of antimicrobials at the point of care.\(^5,\ 6\) Auditing antimicrobial prescribing and antimicrobial usage and providing feedback about patient outcomes markedly improves prescribing in accordance with guidelines.\(^3,\ 7\) Guidelines can also form the basis for educating prescribers on accepted practice for antimicrobial prescribing in the organisation.\(^2\)
More information about Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic

The aim of Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic is to assist clinicians by providing clear, practical, authoritative and succinct therapeutic information, to ensure optimal patient management.

Feedback from users of Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic is essential to its development, and all comments received during the lifetime of the guideline are considered at the next update.

The strength of the evidence for any given treatment is also fundamental to the development of the recommendations in prescribing guidelines. Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic includes detailed information about the process for development of the guidelines, including the way in which ‘evidence rich’ and ‘evidence poor’ areas are dealt with.

Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic can be accessed at www.tg.org.au

References and further reading


* The next edition of Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic (version 15) will be published in November 2014.

This document is intended for use by health professionals. It has been created from information contained in Antibiotic Stewardship in Australian Hospitals 2011 and reviewed by clinical experts. Reasonable care has been taken to ensure this information is accurate at the date of creation. This fact sheet is intended to be used in it original version. It can be downloaded from the Australian Commission on Safety and Quality in Health Care web page www.safetyandquality.gov.au/aaw2013

“No action today, no cure tomorrow” is adopted from the WHO World Health Day 2011.