

Emergency Department Discharge Advice



The Information Standard Certified Member

Information

If you need this information in large print, easy read, on audiotape or in another language please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail pals@dchft.nhs.uk

If you wish to obtain a list of the sources used to develop this information leaflet please call 0800 7838058 or e-mail patient.info@dchft.nhs.uk

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Antibiotics

You have been prescribed antibiotics, either to treat an established infection or to prevent infection from a contaminated wound.

Choice of antibiotic depends both on what type of infection you have and any drug sensitivities you may have. Most antibiotics are effective only against infections caused by bacteria; they do not work for infections caused by viruses, fungi or other unusual micro-organisms. Different bacteria tend to cause different types of infection, and need different kinds of antibiotic to treat them.

All medications can have side effects. Common side effects of antibiotics include:

- skin rashes – this may indicate an allergy, especially if it occurs very rapidly after first taking the antibiotic. You should stop taking the antibiotic and seek medical advice
- gastrointestinal upset – nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps and diarrhoea are common. They are unpleasant but do not represent an allergy, so you can continue to take the antibiotic. However, if symptoms are severe you should seek medical advice

Often the symptoms of an infection improve before the bacteria have been completely eradicated. Therefore you should continue taking the antibiotics until you have finished the course, even if you are feeling better.

Antibiotics often take up to 48 hours to start working properly. If after this time you are not improving you should seek further medical advice.

Specific medicines

Overleaf is a list of common antibiotics, with their main uses and common side effects. For a full list of uses or side effects you should refer to the information leaflet enclosed with your medication.

Please turn over:

Amoxicillin*

- **Main uses:** chest infections, ear infections, urine infections
- **Side effects:** nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, skin rash

Clindamycin

- **Main uses:** cellulitis
- **Side effects:** diarrhoea, abdominal discomfort, vomiting, jaundice, rash

Clarithromycin

- **Main uses:** chest infections, ear infections
- **Side effects:** nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal discomfort, rash, jaundice, sore mouth, interacts with warfarin, caution in pregnancy

Co-amoxiclav (augmentin)*

- **Main uses:** chest infections, animal bites, dental infections
- **Side effects:** skin rashes, diarrhoea, vomiting, jaundice

Doxycycline

- **Main uses:** chest infections (associated with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease), pelvic inflammatory disease, epididymo-orchitis
- **Side effects:** nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, heartburn, skin sensitivity to sunlight/sunburn, dry mouth, flushing, avoid in pregnancy

Flucloxacillin*

- **Main uses:** cellulitis or wound infections
- **Side effects:** skin rashes, joint pains, diarrhoea, vomiting

Metronidazole

- **Main uses:** dental infections
- **Side effects:** nausea, vomiting, furred tongue, interacts with alcohol and warfarin, caution in pregnancy

Phenoxymethylpenicillin (Penicillin V)*

- **Main uses:** throat infections, ear infections, cellulitis
- **Side effects:** skin rashes, joint pains, angiodema

Trimethoprim

- **Main uses:** urine infections
- **Side effects:** nausea, vomiting, rashes, interacts with Warfarin, avoid in pregnancy

* Penicillin based product, avoid if known Penicillin allergy