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## NHS Lanarkshire

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### Internal Memo

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To: All Primary Care Prescribers (NHSL)

From: Antimicrobial Management Team

Date: August 2018

Subject: Treatment Duration for the Management of Uncomplicated Lower UTI

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Dear Colleagues,

### **Recommended Treatment Duration for the Management of Uncomplicated Lower UTI in Non Pregnant Female Patients**

For some time now, **three** day course lengths of Trimethoprim/Nitrofurantoin for uncomplicated female UTI have been highlighted as an issue of unease / concern by some prescribers within NHS Lanarkshire, with anecdotal concern that three day courses of trimethoprim or nitrofurantoin may not be sufficient to successfully treat uncomplicated UTI in female patients.

This correspondence aims to provide information on the current evidence base, including local NHS Lanarkshire data and to help allay fears that a three day supply of these antibiotics may not be enough to appropriately treat such patients. Concerns have been raised that treating for only three days results in a significant proportion of patients returning to see primary care clinicians for further treatment, which then adds to general practice workload, so it's safer to treat for longer.

NHS Lanarkshire guidance consistently recommends a **three** day course of either trimethoprim or nitrofurantoin for uncomplicated lower UTI in women, in line with SIGN 88 (2012) and Public Health England (2017) recommendations. Pharmacy First Services delivered by community pharmacies within NHS Lanarkshire and other Health Boards throughout Scotland also allow for the timely provision of a **three** day course of trimethoprim for female patients with uncomplicated UTI.

In 2017, on average 68% of trimethoprim prescriptions in NHS Lanarkshire were for a three day course, with the remaining 32% of prescriptions for a **five** or **seven** day course, however there was significant variability in course length between individual practices.

A national data analysis was undertaken by Health Protection Scotland (HPS) focusing on repeat antibiotic courses for UTI to determine whether adult women who receive **three** day courses of trimethoprim have more repeat courses than those who receive **five** or **seven** day courses<sup>1</sup>. Data from 108,617 patients prescribed trimethoprim (1<sup>st</sup> January to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016) across Scotland were analysed and results were reported at a Scottish Antimicrobial Prescribing Group (SAPG) meeting in May 2018.

**The study found that THREE day courses of trimethoprim WERE NOT associated with an increased rate of re-prescribing compared to FIVE or SEVEN day courses.**

*Interestingly, seven day courses were associated with a statistically significant increase in repeat antibiotics compared to THREE day courses. Furthermore and more critically, despite reported high levels of trimethoprim non-susceptibility in E.coli urine isolates only 7.2% of adult females returned within 7 days of the date of completion of a course of trimethoprim for a further prescription.*

We hope that these results should provide re-assurance to prescribers that a **three** day course of trimethoprim or nitrofurantoin is sufficient treatment for the vast majority of uncomplicated lower UTI in non-pregnant women without increasing return patient visits and does therefore offer the best patient journey and that adopting this approach does not result in higher re-attendance rates and increase practice workload.

As such NHSL prescribers are asked to be mindful of these new data when considering prescribing for uncomplicated female UTI in day to day clinical practice, in the reassurance you are doing the best thing for your patients with this type of infection.

Kind regards,

Dr Stephanie Dundas, Lead Clinician, Antimicrobial Team, NHSL.  
Mr Steve McCormick, Area Antimicrobial Pharmacist, NHSL  
Mr George Lindsay, Chief Pharmacist, Primary Care, NHSL.  
Prof Eamonn Brankin, Clinical Director, Primary Care, NHSL

On behalf of the NHSL Antimicrobial Team

#### References

1. Malcolm W, Beith A, Sneddon J. 'Analysis of re-prescribing of antibiotics used for urinary tract infection in the community using national information' [Poster]. Displayed at SAPG event on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2018, Delta House, Glasgow.