

Want the Most Up-to-date Antibiotic Guidelines?

Download the Northern Ireland Management of Infection Guidelines App now. Search for **Microguide App** and select Northern Ireland Primary Care when prompted.



Flu Vaccine for Patients in At-Risk Groups

People defined as being 'at risk' are eligible and encouraged to receive the flu vaccination on the NHS through their local GP practice. As with last year, in addition to the eligible 'clinical risk' patients, GPs will be responsible for offering the flu vaccine to all pre-school children aged two years or more on the 1st September 2017.

Community pharmacists are asked to support the flu campaign by promoting the benefits of the flu vaccine to patients in the at risk categories. Further details can be found on the Public Health Agency website: <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/directorate-public-health/health-protection/seasonal-influenza>.

You can also protect your patients by getting the vaccination yourself. It is available free of charge to community pharmacy staff through your local Trust occupational health scheme every year. Some Trust clinics may still be running see the BSO website. For details: www.hscbusiness.hscni.net/services/2570.htm.

Updated NICPLD Course: Antimicrobials

NICPLD have updated and expanded their on-line distance learning course on antimicrobials. There are now six sections: Antibacterial agents (3hrs), Common infections (3hrs), Drug selection (3hrs), Other agents (3hrs), Resistance (3hrs), and Stewardship (2hrs). For further details see NICPLD website: <https://www.nicpld.org>



Antibiotic Amnesty – Round-up The Usual Suspects!

As part of education to patients, patients should be advised not to take leftover antibiotics to treat a current infection: antibiotics are effective only against specific bacteria, so do not assume that the old medication will take care of your current infection. Equally, antibiotics should not be shared between family and friends.

To promote this, patients should be encouraged to return unused antibiotics to the pharmacy.

Become an Antibiotic Guardian

Become an Antibiotic Guardian. Choose one simple pledge about how you'll make better use of antibiotics and help save these vital medicines from becoming obsolete.

For more details visit <http://antibioticguardian.com/>



This newsletter has been produced for community pharmacists and pharmacy staff by the Regional Pharmacy and Medicines Management Team. If you have any queries or require further information on the contents of this newsletter, please contact one of the Pharmacy Advisors in your local HSCB office:

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Past and current editions of the PRN can be found in the Newsletters section of the Northern Ireland Formulary website <http://niformulary.hscni.net/PrescribingNewsletters/Pages/default.aspx>.

Every effort has been made to ensure that the information included in this newsletter is correct at the time of publication. This newsletter is not to be used for commercial purposes.



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Focus On Antibiotic Resistance – A Concern For Us All

With the Winter season approaching, this edition of the PRN newsletter focuses on antimicrobial resistance and stewardship.

Antimicrobial stewardship (AMS) is the appropriate use of antimicrobials, including antibiotics. The aim of AMS is to reduce the development of antimicrobial resistance, and ensure that antibiotics continue to be an effective treatment against infections.

Community pharmacy teams have a key role in contributing to this target by educating patients and the public on the appropriate, and more importantly inappropriate, use of antimicrobials.



CMO Recognises The Role Pharmacy Has To Play In Antimicrobial Stewardship



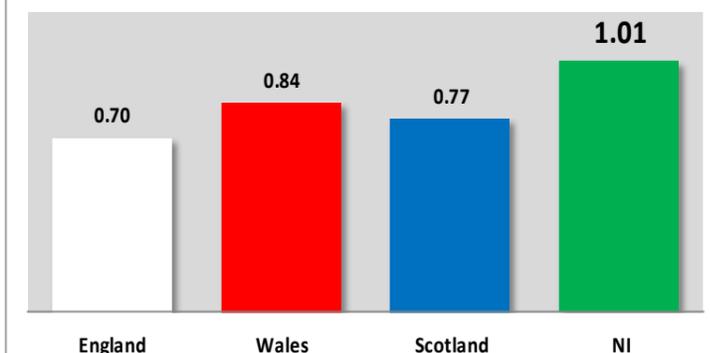
The recently published Chief Medical Officer (CMO) [report](#) has a heavy focus on antimicrobial resistance and stewardship, with over a quarter of the report dedicated to it.

CMO Dr Michael McBride described how 1.9 million individual antibiotic prescriptions were issued by GPs and dentists in 2016 in Northern Ireland. This means 1.9 million antibiotic prescriptions passed through community pharmacies, with opportunities for patient education.

This puts Northern Ireland in the unenviable position of highest consumption of antibiotics in the UK, 44% higher than England, and the only nation which issues more than one course of antibiotics per head of the population, as the chart shows.

The CMO described how pharmacists have a key role to play in antibiotic prescribing and supply, including advising medical and nursing staff, and patients, on the safe and appropriate use of medicines.

Antibiotics per head- how we compare



Raising Awareness of Antibiotic Resistance European Antibiotic Awareness Day: 18th November World Antibiotic Awareness Week: 13th to 19th November

The European Antibiotic Awareness Day is an annual European public health initiative that takes place every year on 18th November to raise awareness about the threat to public health of antibiotic resistance and the importance of prudent antibiotic use. The latest data confirms that across the European Union the number of patients infected by resistant bacteria is increasing and that antibiotic resistance is a major threat to public health. Prudent use of antibiotics can help stop resistant bacteria from developing and help keep antibiotics effective for the use of future generations.



Some Ways Community Pharmacy Can Contribute to Antimicrobial Stewardship

- Provide opportunistic patient advice and counselling such as hand hygiene, appropriate use of antimicrobials and self-care.
- Responding to symptoms of ill health, as well as advising on self-care and products that can be purchased for symptom relief.
- Identifying 'alarm' symptoms which require further investigation.
- Providing preventative advice, particularly for individuals who suffer from recurring infections, e.g. advising hydration for urinary tract infections.
- Advise patients to complete antibiotic courses – and if they are told to stop to return the unused medication to the pharmacy.
- Display the promotional material on antimicrobial stewardship.
- Educate the public on the key antimicrobial stewardship messages below.

Key Messages For The Public That Pharmacy Staff Can Provide

You can support your local GP in reducing the demand for antibiotics from the public this winter by spreading some key messages in the pharmacy:

- Antibiotics will not work on ANY cold, and most coughs, sore throats or earache. Generally healthy people can fight these infections without antibiotics.

Duration of common respiratory infections	Most are better in
Middle-ear infection	8 days
Sore throat	7 to 8 days
Common cold	14 days
Sinusitis	14 to 21 days
Cough or bronchitis	21 days

- OTC medications can help to relieve your symptoms; unnecessary antibiotics may make you feel worse because of side-effects like diarrhoea.
- The more we use antibiotics, the greater the chance that bacteria will become resistant to them so that they no longer work on our infections.
- Drug resistant infections don't just affect you, they can spread to other people in close contact with you (and even pets!) and are very difficult to treat.

Self Care Campaign

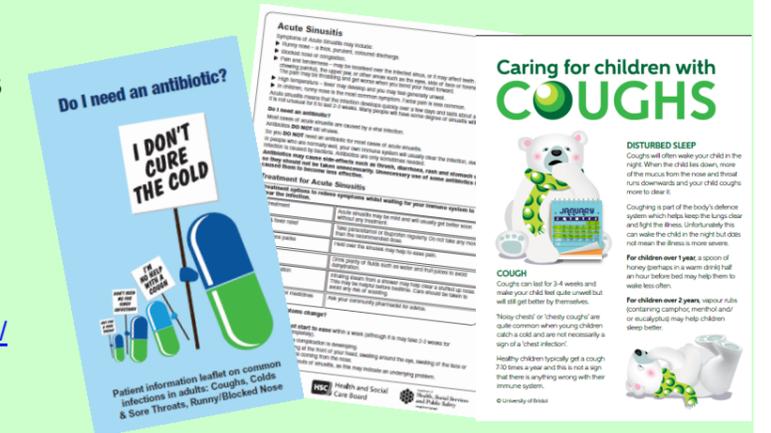
Common health complaints, such as coughs, colds and headaches, account for up to one out of five GP appointments. Many of these can be treated faster and just as effectively at home using self-care, advice from the community pharmacist and over-the-counter medicines.

Self-care is about health decisions that people make for themselves and their families to get and stay well, both physically and mentally. Further information on the **Go Ahead, Treat Yourself!** campaign can be found in the Patient Zone section of the Northern Ireland Formulary website <http://niformulary.hscni.net/PatientZone/SC/GATY/Pages/default.aspx>.



Self Care Resources for Coughs and Colds

Resources are available in the Patient Zone section of the Northern Formulary to help counsel patients on how to self manage self-limiting or viral infections: <http://niformulary.hscni.net/PatientZone/YourMeds/Pages/default.aspx>. Paper copies available from your local HSCB offices.



TARGET Antibiotic Toolkit

The TARGET Antibiotic Toolkit has now been endorsed for use in NI and contains useful self-care guides. The toolkit includes a range of resources that can each be used to support prescribers' and patients' responsible antibiotic use, helping to fulfil CPD and revalidation requirements. Further details can be found at: <http://www.rcgp.org.uk/clinical-and-research/toolkits/target-antibiotic-toolkit.aspx>.



Delayed Prescriptions — Are They Effective?

Strategies of 'no prescription' or delayed antibiotic prescription result in less than 40% of patients using antibiotics. Such strategies are associated with less strong beliefs in antibiotics by patients. Similar symptomatic outcomes to an immediate prescription were reported (*Little, P. et al., BMJ. 2014; 348*).

Some GPs may endorse or stamp a prescription, some may verbally advise the patient. Support by community pharmacies for either approach will reinforce the effectiveness of this intervention. Patients can be advised of the effectiveness of simple OTC symptomatic relief.

