

Are you using antibiotics wisely?

Up to **50%** of older adults in long-term care (LTC) have bacteria in their urine but do not have a urinary tract infection (UTI). Unnecessary antibiotic use in older adults with asymptomatic bacteriuria can be harmful and lead to serious complications.

Health professionals working in LTC are key partners in the battle against antimicrobial resistance—an emerging public health threat. The below practice change statements will help you optimize your antibiotic prescribing.

The following key practice changes have been identified and are intended to reduce unnecessary antibiotic use for asymptomatic bacteriuria in LTC. They are not a substitute for timely individual clinical assessment and management and do not apply to the acutely unwell resident with suspected sepsis.

PROCESS OF CARE

PRACTICE CHANGE RECOMMENDATIONS

1.

**NEW ADMISSION/
PERIODIC HEALTH
EXAMINATIONS/NEW
REFERRALS IN LTC**

Don't perform screening urinalysis/urine dipstick and/or urine culture and sensitivity for residents on admission, during periodic health examinations, or prior to new specialist referrals.

2.

**USE OF URINE DIPSTICK
OR URINALYSIS**

Don't perform urine dipstick/urinalysis to diagnose a UTI.

3.

**ASSESSMENT OF
RESIDENT WITH CHANGE
IN HEALTH STATUS (E.G.
CHANGE IN URINE ODOUR
OR COLOUR, CHANGE IN
BEHAVIOUR, FEVER, ETC.)**

Don't assume a UTI is the cause of any change in health status, including behaviours, until alternate explanations are excluded, such as volume depletion, constipation, skin breakdown, medication side effects, and other sources of infection. Don't send a urine culture unless the change noted is accompanied by **minimum criteria** for a UTI (specific for residents with and without catheters). Do perform a clinical assessment to identify alternate causes for change in health status including examination of the perineal skin. Do complete a comprehensive delirium workup, if clinically indicated, which may include a urine culture (See Practice Change Recommendation #5). Do encourage increased fluid intake if urine is concentrated or malodorous. Do document and reassess.

4.

**SUBSTITUTE DECISION
MAKER/FAMILY REQUEST
TO SUBMIT A URINE
CULTURE OR TREAT A UTI**

Don't collect a urine culture upon request without first seeking to understand and address resident/substitute decision maker/family concerns. Provide a differential diagnosis and a rationale for the investigations that will help identify the etiology of the symptoms.

Minimum criteria are found in the box on the next page. →

5.

MANAGEMENT OF RESIDENT WITH CLINICAL CRITERIA FOR A UTI

Don't order a urine culture unless **minimum criteria** for a UTI are present.

6.

MANAGEMENT OF RESIDENT WITH POSITIVE URINE CULTURE

Don't prescribe antibiotics unless **minimum criteria** for a UTI are met.

Don't treat a UTI for excessive durations.

7.

SELECTING ANTIBIOTIC AND DURATION FOR A RESIDENT WITH CLINICAL CRITERIA FOR A UTI

DURATION OF THERAPY DEPENDS ON UTI SYNDROME	
UTI Syndrome	Duration of Therapy
Uncomplicated cystitis	3–5 days depending on antibiotic chosen
Complicated cystitis (male resident, catheterized resident, urological abnormalities)	7 days
Acute pyelonephritis	7 days

8.

FOLLOW-UP ASSESSMENT OF RESIDENT WITH CLINICAL CRITERIA FOR A UTI

Don't forget to reassess the need for antimicrobial therapy within 3 days of starting antibiotics to check antibiotic sensitivity results and that the resident is improving. Antibiotic therapy should be stopped if result of the urine culture collected before antibiotics is negative.

9.

RESIDENT TRANSFERRED TO THE EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Don't routinely screen residents from LTC homes with a urinalysis/urine dipstick unless **minimum criteria** for a UTI are present. Look for alternate explanations for change in clinical status. Refer to Practice Change Recommendation #3.

MINIMUM CRITERIA FOR UTI (MODIFIED LOEB CRITERIA^{1,2})

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¹Note that these are clinical criteria validated for diagnosis for a UTI and differ from criteria that are used for surveillance.

²Note that confusion alone is not symptom of UTI in non-catheterized resident.

To learn more about the campaign or access tools and resources, please visit: www.choosingwiselycanada.org/antibiotics-LTC.