

Antimicrobial stewardship

PRACTICE ALERT: Queensland Community Pharmacy Prescribing

Key Points

- Inappropriate use of antimicrobials can contribute to antimicrobial resistance which can result in delayed recovery, treatment failure, and increased risk of serious outcomes.
- Pharmacists should only prescribe antimicrobial therapy where a clear diagnosis has been made and antibiotic therapy is indicated for the treatment of the condition in the *Therapeutic Guidelines*.

Background

Pharmacists in Queensland are authorised to prescribe antimicrobials for general health conditions in accordance with the [Extended Practice Authority – Pharmacists](#) (the EPA). Pharmacists must refer to the specific sections of the *Therapeutic Guidelines* outlined in the EPA when prescribing a medicine for an approved indication.

Adhering to the *Therapeutic Guidelines* ensures that antimicrobial use aligns with national antimicrobial stewardship principles. This is especially important for conditions where antimicrobials are not always the first-line treatment such as for acute otitis media, acute otitis externa, and minor wound management.

Supporting Antimicrobial stewardship prescribing principles

Pharmacists play a critical role in promoting antimicrobial stewardship and protecting the long-term effectiveness of antimicrobials. When prescribing antimicrobials, pharmacists are reminded to:

- Determine if antimicrobials are necessary for the indication – use clinical judgment to consider whether safe, non-antibiotic options are appropriate for initial management.
- Prescribe the right antimicrobial at the right dose for the right duration and via the right route.
- Ensure timely referrals for further investigations (e.g., pathology testing) are made where required for optimal management. Refer to appropriate clinical guidelines to support these decisions.
- Consider local resistance patterns and the antimicrobial's spectrum of activity to guide treatment.
- Document clinical reasoning, patient advice, and safety counselling provided.
- Educate patients on infection prevention, treatment expectations, antibiotic resistance and symptom management.
- Remain up to date with current guidance in the *Therapeutics Guidelines*.

Useful resources

- [HOTspots](#) and [Antimicrobial Use and Resistance in Australia \(AURA\)](#) - data on antimicrobial resistance patterns within Australia including resistance profiles in some local areas.
- [Antimicrobial Resistance: What you can do for Pharmacy](#) – Australian Government website with resources on antimicrobial stewardship including infographics and factsheets.
- [QUM Learning: Antimicrobial modules](#) – Free online training designed to reinforce antimicrobial stewardship principles when prescribing.