

# It's about time:

## Antibiotic duration

Information for community clinicians on **antibiotic duration** for common conditions in adults



The recommended duration of antibiotic therapy for many infections are probably **SHORTER** than you think. Monitor clinical progress and review any culture and susceptibility results, then modify therapy and duration if required.

Location	Condition	Recommended duration*
Ear, nose and throat	Acute bacterial sinusitis	<i>Empirical antibiotics not usually required</i> If antibiotics are indicated, <b>5 days</b>
	Otitis media	<i>Empirical antibiotics not usually required</i> If antibiotics are indicated, <b>5 days</b>
	Pharyngitis and tonsillitis	<i>Empirical antibiotics not usually required</i> If streptococcal infection suspected: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>10 days</b> for patients at high risk of rheumatic fever</li> <li><b>5 days</b> if for symptom benefit only</li> <li><b>5 days</b> if treated with azithromycin (patients with severe penicillin allergy)</li> </ul>
Eyes	Conjunctivitis	<i>Empirical antibiotics not usually required</i> If bacterial causes suspected, topical up to <b>7 days</b>
Gastrointestinal	Acute infectious diarrhoea	<i>Empirical antibiotics not usually required</i> If bacterial causes suspected, <b>3 days</b>
Respiratory	Acute bronchitis	<i>Empirical antibiotics not usually required</i>
	Community-acquired pneumonia (including aspiration)	<b>5 to 7 days</b>
	Infective exacerbation of bronchiectasis	<b>10 to 14 days</b>
	Infective exacerbation of COPD	<b>5 days</b>
Skin and soft tissue	Cellulitis	Without systemic features: <b>5 days</b> With systemic features: <b>5 to 10 days</b>
Urinary Tract	Cystitis	Female: <b>5 days</b> (except trimethoprim, <b>3 days</b> ) Male: <b>7 days</b>
	Pyelonephritis	<b>10 to 14 days</b> (except ciprofloxacin, <b>7 days</b> )

\*Therapeutic Guidelines: Antibiotic, Version 16, 2019