

Metronidazole oral - medication shortage

Fact Sheet – for hospitals and acute care facilities

This **Fact Sheet** is intended as a **guide only** and does not equate to expert opinion. Interpretation of recommendations should always be taken in context with the patient's current condition and formal clinical review.



There is currently an Australia-wide shortage of **oral metronidazole**

If your patient is currently prescribed oral metronidazole, please consider the following:

Is metronidazole **required** for the indication?

- Review your local guidelines or the **Therapeutic Guidelines**
- If metronidazole is not required for the indication, **CEASE**
- *For example;*
 - metronidazole is not routinely required for aspiration pneumonia.
 - the addition of metronidazole is not usually required for patients receiving concurrent piperacillin-tazobactam or amoxicillin-clavulanate or clindamycin

If oral metronidazole is still recommended for the indication, consult with an infectious diseases physician or clinical microbiologist to discuss alternatives

The most appropriate alternative antibiotic regimen will vary depending on the site and severity of infection and patient factors including antibiotic allergies. [Check guidelines for more details.](#)

Clindamycin

- Clindamycin may be a useful alternative for:
 - ear/nose/throat and dental infections, or
 - lung infections related to aspiration, or
 - contaminated skin and soft tissue infections.
- Clindamycin treats many anaerobes (*with some exceptions such as Bacteroides spp., which usually reside in the lower bowel*).

Amoxicillin-clavulanate

- Amoxicillin-clavulanate may be a useful alternative for:
 - intraabdominal infections, or
 - ear/ nose/throat and dental infections, or
 - lung infections related to aspiration, or
 - contaminated skin and soft tissue infections.
- Amoxicillin-clavulanate treats anaerobes, including *Bacteroides spp.*
- Clarify penicillin allergy status before switching antimicrobial therapy.

Oral vancomycin

- An alternative only for *Clostridioides difficile* infection

Intravenous metronidazole

- If metronidazole is the only appropriate antimicrobial therapy available, consider switching to intravenous (IV) metronidazole.