



# Tablet Press **EXTRA**

The prescribing newsletter for GPs, nurses and pharmacists  
NHS Northamptonshire  
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## UTI Prescribing Update Trimethoprim in over 70s

### The Good News

In February 2017 Tablet Press Extras on the topics of acute UTI [link](#) and recurrent UTI [link](#) were circulated. These summarised recent advice on diagnosing and treating UTI and highlighted that trimethoprim was no longer recommended by Public Health England, particularly in the elderly, as the first line choice due to increasing levels of resistance.

Since then there has been a 31% drop in **overall** trimethoprim prescribing and a corresponding drop in the trimethoprim to nitrofurantoin ratio. Both Nene and Corby CCGs achieved the NHSE Quality Premium target for 2017-18 for trimethoprim:nitrofurantoin ratio.

### The Not So Good News

Trimethoprim prescribing in patients over 70 is above NHS England's target for both CCGs. Patients over 70 with UTIs are more likely to be infected with strains of E. Coli resistant to trimethoprim. Locally, resistance rates are as high as 30%.

Elderly patients are more likely to develop E. Coli sepsis and have much higher mortality rates if sepsis does develop. Selecting an antibiotic that is likely to be effective at the outset of treatment is very important.

### What can we do?

- For most patients with GFR > 45mls/min nitrofurantoin should be the first choice for lower UTI.
- If nitrofurantoin cannot be used pivmecillinam may be a suitable first choice antibiotic.
- Trimethoprim should only be used in over 70s if there is evidence of sensitivity on a recent MSU.
- Nitrofurantoin liquid is very expensive. If patients have swallowing difficulties consider the risk of resistance. If this is low eg most children, then trimethoprim liquid may be suitable.
- All patients should have advice on self-care and strategies to prevent UTI. They should also be advised of symptoms of more serious infection and when to seek help. The recently published leaflet from RCGP Target campaign and PHE may be helpful [link](#) .
- Hydration is important for prevention of UTI and may help prevent sepsis. There is evidence that rates of gram negative blood stream infections increase in the Summer months and in hotter weather.
- Use of urine dips stick testing for UTI diagnosis is not recommended in patients over 65 due to the high incidence of asymptomatic bacteriuria.
- Fosfomycin granules 3g stat may be an option if resistance to first line agents is confirmed.

This edition is also available on PathfinderRF  
<http://www.pathfinder-rf.northants.nhs.uk/nene>

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