



Messaging accompanying issue 11 of green/red reports (for GMS data to end Dec. 2021) issued May 2022

Overall aim of this antibiotic quality improvement initiative: high percentage of green antibiotic agents and a rate of prescribing that is as low as is practical while ensuring that those most likely to benefit from antibiotics receive that benefit.

Time period for report: your antibiotic prescribing report includes antibiotic prescriptions attributed to your GMS number for 12 consecutive months up to the end of *December 2021*. This report will be updated each quarter. It is acknowledged that some prescriptions assigned to your GMS number may be by prescribers in 'out of hours' services and in hospitals.

Key message:

This report (issue 11) is the second report to include the rate of prescribing for your GMS list. While you may have made improvements in your rate of prescribing since issue 10 (circulated March 2022), these improvements will not be reflected in the data included in this report as the data refers to the 12 months ending December 2021.

In this report we would like to highlight some safe prescribing tips in relation to azithromycin.

*Azithromycin is considered a red (not preferred) antibiotic because of its significant adverse effect profile. It is often poorly tolerated by patients because of gastrointestinal disturbances, it has a higher risk of causing *Clostridioides difficile* diarrhoea than many other antibiotics, it interacts with multiple medications, it can cause QT prolongation and hearing or balance disturbances. For adult patients with a suspected bacterial LRTI who are allergic to penicillin then doxycycline is an effective and much safer option.

*Azithromycin prophylaxis should be initiated by a consultant in respiratory medicine. It is recommended to review its use every 6-12 months and if there is no evidence of clinical benefit or there is evidence of adverse effects (hearing and balance disturbance, liver or cardiac effects), it should be discontinued. Azithromycin prophylaxis in adults with respiratory disease guidance available at: www.bit.ly/3sbo0UN

Or access via www.antibioticprescribing.ie "lower respiratory section" for azithromycin prophylaxis in adults with respiratory disease guidance and other respiratory guidance.