



## Messaging accompanying issue 7 of green/red reports

March 2021

### Tips on deprescribing UTI antibiotic prophylaxis

With this report, we would like to highlight a message about the use of nitrofurantoin, in particular its use for urinary prophylaxis.

Before you renew a script for long term nitrofurantoin consider if the benefit is worth the risk of harm.

- Nitrofurantoin is generally a safe and effective agent for use in treatment of uncomplicated cystitis.
- Long-term use of nitrofurantoin is associated with some uncommon but very serious side effects including hepatitis, interstitial pneumonitis and pulmonary fibrosis.
- The most common reason for long-term use of nitrofurantoin is with a view to preventing urinary tract infection.
- Use for this purpose for periods of 3 to 6 months may be useful in carefully selected patients.
- Nitrofurantoin prophylaxis is very unlikely to help people with a urinary catheter.
- Continued use of nitrofurantoin for longer than 3 to 6 months is very unlikely to benefit most people and exposes them to risk of harm that is usually hard to justify.
- Use of any antibiotic for prophylaxis of urinary tract infection should be reviewed at least every 3 to 6 months.
- A recent paper (Langford *et al.*, 2021) studied UTI prophylaxis in older adults. They found that people on long-term antibiotic UTI prophylaxis are more likely to have to go to hospital or ED for UTI, sepsis, or bloodstream infection. They are also more likely to get *C. difficile* diarrhoea, an adverse event and to have antibiotic resistant bacteria.
- An audit in quarter 4 2020 of antimicrobial use in HSE community older person facilities includes findings relating to UTI prophylaxis: see full report here <https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/2/gp/antibiotic-prescribing/prescribing-ltcf/prescribing-ltcf.html>
- For further information regarding 'deprescribing UTI prophylaxis' see [www.antibioticprescribing.ie](http://www.antibioticprescribing.ie)