

STRATEGIES TO REDUCE ANTIBIOTIC OVERUSE IN PRIMARY CARE: DELAYED PRESCRIBING

ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP STRATEGY DESCRIPTION

When assessing patients with possible bacterial infections (i.e., sinusitis, otitis media):

- Give them a postdated antibiotic prescription and



- Ask them to fill it at a pharmacy only if specific criteria are met (i.e., symptoms continue or worsen)

RESOURCES & HOW TO INCORPORATE INTO PRACTICE

[The Cold Standard Toolkit](#) by Choosing Wisely Canada (CWC) gives practical tips on how to implement this strategy for in-person/virtual visits.¹



Clinicians can provide this [handout](#) from CWC to patients along with a delayed prescription.

Available in different languages, the handout can also be [incorporated into an electronic medical record \(EMR\)](#).²

IMPACT ON ANTIMICROBIAL USE



A Cochrane review found that delayed antibiotic prescriptions for **respiratory tract infections** are associated with lower rates of antibiotic use.³

However, as 1 in 3 delayed prescriptions will be filled, this strategy should not be used for viral infections when antibiotics are not indicated (i.e.; bronchitis, viral respiratory tract infections).⁴



Decreased rates of antibiotic use for delayed prescriptions (31%) vs. immediate prescriptions (93%)

References

1. Choosing Wisely Canada. The cold standard: a toolkit for using antibiotics wisely in the era of COVID-19 and virtual care [Internet]. 3rd ed. Toronto, ON: Choosing Wisely Canada; 2021 [cited 2022 Sep 19]. Available from: <https://choosingwiselycanada.org/toolkit/the-cold-standard/>
2. Choosing Wisely Canada. Delayed prescription [Internet]. Toronto, ON:

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3. Spurling GKP, Del Mar CB, Dooley L, Foxlee R, Farley R. Delayed antibiotic prescriptions for respiratory infections. Cochrane Database Syst Rev. 2017;9:CD004417. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1002/14651858.CD004417.pub5>

4. Rowe TA, Linder JA. Delayed antibiotic prescriptions in ambulatory care: reconsidering a problematic practice. JAMA. 2020;323(18):1779-80. Available from: <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.2020.2325>