

Prostatitis (acute): antimicrobial prescribing

Information for the public

Published: 31 October 2018

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Prostatitis: do I need antibiotics?

Prostatitis is a bacterial infection that causes temporary swelling of the prostate gland. Symptoms include severe pain around the genitals, anus, lower back or abdomen, problems passing urine, joint and muscle aches, and fever. Although painful, prostatitis usually gets better within a few weeks with antibiotics.

You should be offered antibiotics for prostatitis because:

- The infection is caused by a bacteria.
- If it's not treated it can lead to a more serious problem, such as an abscess.

You can also help your symptoms in other ways, for example by taking a painkiller like paracetamol (or paracetamol and codeine), or ibuprofen if this is suitable for you. It is also important to drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated.

Your doctor should explain that antibiotics can cause side effects, such as diarrhoea and nausea (feeling sick).

You should see your doctor if you don't start to feel better 2 days after you start antibiotics, or sooner if you start to feel worse. Your doctor should refer you to hospital if you have signs of serious illness such as sepsis.

Where can I find out more?

Decisions about treatment and care are best when they are made together. Your health professionals should give you clear information, talk with you about your options and listen carefully to your views and concerns.

[The NHS website](#) has more information about:

- [prostatitis](#) and
- [antibiotics](#).

We have also written information on [why antibiotics should be used wisely](#).

We wrote this guideline with health professionals and members of the public. All the recommendations are based on the best research available.

ISBN: 978-1-4731-3123-1