

Health Professionals – fact sheet

SA Community Pharmacy UTI Services

From 1 March 2024, eligible South Australian women aged 18-65 with symptoms of uncomplicated urinary tract infections (UTIs) can speak to trained community pharmacists and may be supplied specified antibiotic treatment through SA Community Pharmacy UTI Services, without needing a prescription from a doctor, if they meet clinical criteria.

This is in accordance with the [Community Pharmacy Urinary Tract Infection Treatment Services Scheme](#).

SA Community Pharmacy UTI Services complement existing health services, offering timely advice and treatment for patients when they can't access usual care and will help to reduce hospital emergency department admissions.

History of SA Community Pharmacy UTI Services

The *Select Committee on Access to Urinary Tract Infection Treatment* was established in December 2022 to inquire and report on barriers facing women experiencing UTIs in gaining timely access to treatment. In November 2023, the South Australian government announced its endorsement of all of the Senate Committee's recommendations.

Patient eligibility

Women aged 18 to 65 years with symptoms of an uncomplicated UTI can speak with a trained pharmacist to be assessed to determine if they are likely experiencing an uncomplicated UTI and are at low risk of complications or other conditions.

Patients who are assessed by a pharmacist as being at risk of a complicated UTI, having health complications or displaying any symptoms of a serious infection, will be referred to a GP or other health services as appropriate. Patients may also be referred if there are symptoms inconsistent with a UTI (e.g. a sexually transmitted infection).

Further information on patient eligibility is available in the [SA Community Pharmacy Urinary Tract Infection Services Scheme UTI Management Protocol](#).

UTI Management Protocol

The [UTI Management Protocol](#) provides a framework for pharmacists authorised to supply approved medicines under the SA Community Pharmacy UTI Services Scheme. It includes a Clinical Flow Chart that provides information to guide assessment and clinical decision-making on management of uncomplicated UTI and appropriate referral to a GP or other health service (such as healthdirect, Medicare Urgent Care Clinic or hospital emergency department, where appropriate).

This resource has been developed in consultation with medical and pharmacy experts together with consumer input and is based on national evidence-based clinical guidelines and professional standards for management of uncomplicated UTI.

Pharmacists will refer to the [UTI Management Protocol](#) in conjunction with relevant professional practice standards and evidence based clinical guidelines (upon which it is based), in particular

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the [Pharmaceutical Society of Australia \(PSA\) Treatment Guidelines for Pharmacists – Cystitis](#), advice contained within the *Therapeutic Guidelines* and *Australian Medicines Handbook*, and the *Pharmaceutical Society of Australia Professional Practice Standards 2023, version 6*. The [SA Health Urinary Tract Infections \(adult\): Empirical Treatment Clinical Guideline \(PDF 514KB\)](#) is also in place in South Australia.

Medicines available for treatment

Under the SA Community Pharmacy UTI Services, the following medicines may be supplied by a pharmacist without a prescription to eligible patients where treatment is indicated :

- > trimethoprim; or
- > nitrofurantoin, where trimethoprim is not appropriate for the patient or not available; or
- > cefalexin, where trimethoprim and nitrofurantoin are not appropriate for the patient or not available.

Clinical documentation and patient information

Consultations including any supply of antibiotics or other treatment will be documented and recorded by the pharmacist, irrespective of whether a person is supplied an antibiotic or other treatment. Pharmacists will obtain patient consent to upload information about the consultation and treatment into My Health Record. To support continuity of care, patients will be provided a record of their consultation (e.g., patient assessment checklist) and encouraged to pass on this information to their GP. Patients should be advised to seek GP or other health service advice if symptoms worsen, or they have not responded to treatment within two days.

Referrals to GP services

GPs may receive referrals from pharmacists as part of these services. Practice managers should be alerted to the possibility of pharmacists contacting general practices to facilitate a referral, as part of follow-up or referral from Community Pharmacy UTI Services.

Pharmacist Training

All registered pharmacists undertake extensive study in all aspects of healthcare as part of undergraduate or postgraduate studies. Completion of specific accredited training for pharmacists on UTI treatment is mandatory prior to offering SA Community Pharmacy UTI Services. Pharmacist must also complete cultural safety and gender diversity training relevant to their place of practice.

Resources

[SA Community Pharmacy Urinary Tract Infection \(UTI\) Services | SA Health](#)

Feedback

If you would like to provide feedback on the services, you may email:

health.officeofthechiefpharmacist@sa.gov.au