

**NICE Guidance Leg Ulcer Infection – Public Health England Last Updated February 2020**

There are many causes of leg ulcer; any underlying conditions, such as venous insufficiency and oedema, should be managed to promote healing

- Few leg ulcers are clinically infected
- Most leg ulcers are colonised by bacteria
- Antibiotics **don't** promote healing when a leg ulcer is not clinically infected

**Symptoms and signs of an infected leg ulcer include:**

- redness or swelling spreading beyond the ulcer
- localised warmth
- increased pain
- fever

Infection	Medicine	Doses (Adult)	Length
Leg ulcer	<b>First choice:</b> Flucloxacillin	500mg to 1g QDS	7 days
Leg ulcer	Penicillin allergy or if Flucloxacillin unsuitable: Doxycycline <b>OR</b>	200mg on day1, then 100mg OD (can be increased to 200mg daily)	7 Days
Leg ulcer	Clarithromycin <b>OR</b>	500mg BD	7 Days

Leg ulcer	Erythromycin (in pregnancy)	500mg QDS	7 Days
Leg ulcer	<b>Second choice:</b> Co-amoxiclav <b>OR</b>	500/125 TDS	7 days
Leg ulcer	Co-trimoxazole (in penicillin allergy)	960mg BD	7 Days

### Key Points

#### Prescribing considerations When choosing an antibiotic, take account of:

- the severity of symptoms or signs
- the risk of complications
- previous antibiotic use

Few leg ulcers are clinically infected, but most are colonised by bacteria. When prescribing antibiotics, take account of severity, risk of complications and previous antibiotic use.

**Do not take a sample for microbial testing at initial presentation, even if the ulcer might be infected.**

For detailed information click on the visual summary

<https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng152>

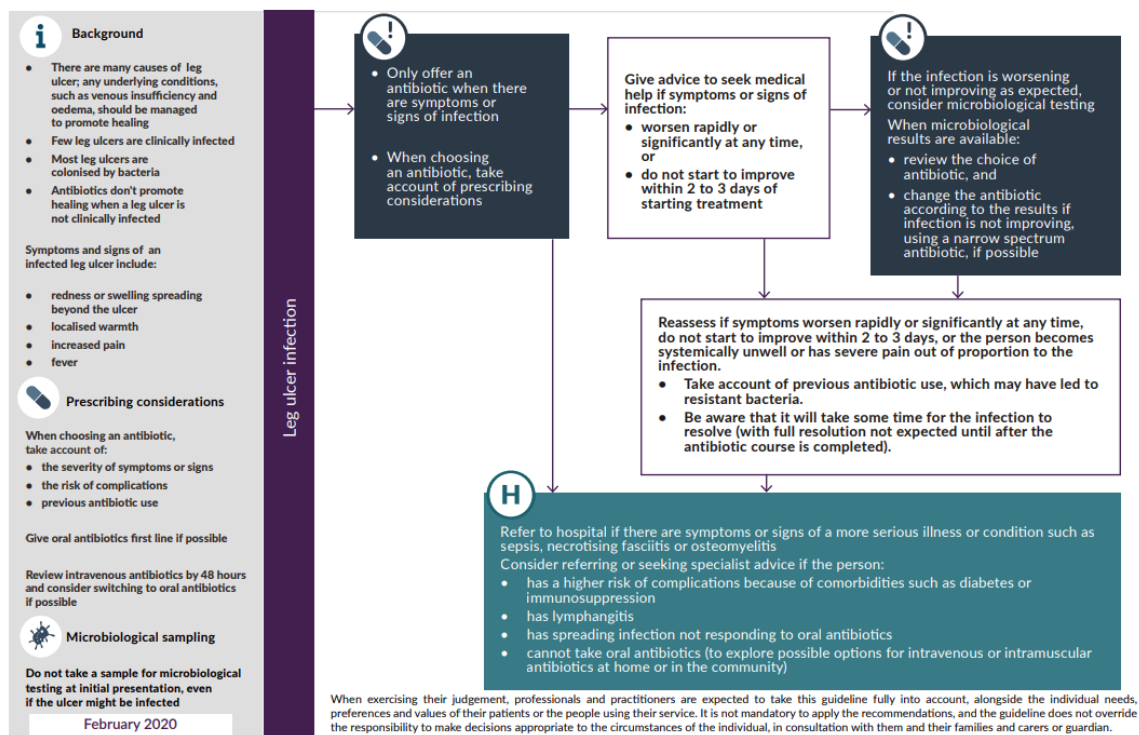
- For wound Infection continuum and identifying wound infection/or Biofilm

[Tissue Viability - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

- For dressing selection support. [Wound management guidelines and formulary - Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust](#)
- Wound swabbing techniques and guidance [Tissue Viability - Home \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

## Leg ulcer infection: antimicrobial prescribing

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