

HOSPITAL PHARMACISTS:  
BE ANTIBIOTICS AWARE

# Avoid Treatment of Asymptomatic Bacteriuria



## SCENARIO

A medical resident calls you asking for your recommendation on antibiotic choice based on a patient's urine culture report.

Asymptomatic bacteriuria refers to the isolation of bacteria in urine culture from a patient without signs or symptoms of urinary tract infection (UTI). A positive urine culture result (with or without pyuria) alone does not meet criteria for initiation of antibiotics according to infectious diseases guidelines. Exceptions include pregnancy and invasive genitourinary procedures.<sup>1</sup>

## Pharmacists can help avoid unnecessary treatment of asymptomatic bacteriuria by:



1. Prompting the provider to consider if the patient has signs and symptoms consistent with UTI prior to making a recommendation for treatment. Signs and symptoms may include:<sup>1,2</sup>

- ✓ urinary urgency
- ✓ urinary frequency
- ✓ dysuria
- ✓ suprapubic pain
- ✓ flank pain
- ✓ pelvic discomfort
- ✓ acute hematuria
- ✓ fever

Note: Delirium or nausea/vomiting should be interpreted with caution as, by themselves, they have a low specificity for UTI!



2. Discussing the potential for avoiding antibiotic use with the provider if the patient has asymptomatic bacteriuria.

*The scenarios and recommendations discussed are applicable to most immunocompetent adult patients. Prior to making interventions, always assess the individual patient and use your clinical judgment. Follow your institution's treatment guidelines when applicable.*

### References:

1. Nicolle LE, Gupta K, Bradley SF, et al. Clinical Practice Guideline for the Management of Asymptomatic Bacteriuria: 2019 Update by the Infectious Diseases Society of America. *Clin Infect Dis*. 2019 March 21 [Epub] <https://academic.oup.com/cid/article/68/10/e633/5407632>.
2. Implementation of Antibiotic Stewardship Core Elements at Small and Critical Access Hospitals. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. [www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/healthcare/implementation/core-elements-small-critical.html](http://www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use/healthcare/implementation/core-elements-small-critical.html).



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