

# Self-Care for Intravenous Antibiotic Therapy for Musculoskeletal infections

## Introduction

Self-care intravenous antibiotic pump therapy is a new treatment supported by our Trauma Assessment Unit (TAU) virtual ward team, which allows patients to return to the comfort of their own homes while continuing intravenous antibiotic treatment. We expect this to lead to a reduction in risks to patients, reduced costs and a more sustainable model of healthcare.

### What are the benefits?

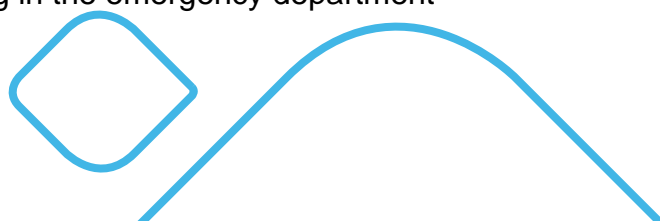
This treatment is only offered to patients with mild to moderate infections who are well enough to be discharged home but may benefit from intravenous (IV) antibiotics. A virtual ward is a way of continuing your care away from a hospital setting. Using virtual wards and antibiotic pumps we are now able to give you the benefits of intravenous antibiotics but without the need for you to stay in hospital. Our virtual ward team at the TAU includes our trauma and orthopaedic doctors and nursing team.

### Benefits to you?

- Recovery from your illness in the comfort of your own home
- Maintain your independence
- Reduced risk of hospital-acquired infections
- Improved rest

### Benefits to the hospital?

- Reduced costs
- More sustainable for the NHS
- Ward beds can be used for other patients waiting in the emergency department
- Less labour intensive for staff



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## How does this work?

If you meet our strict inclusion criteria and choose to have your antibiotic treatment using an antibiotic pump, you will be asked to sign our patient assessment form. The risks and benefits of this process will be explained by the orthopaedic and nursing team.

Only patients assessed as safe to use a self-care antibiotic pump at home will be allowed to proceed with this treatment. You will then be admitted to our virtual ward. You will be provided with information on how to look after your pump and going home with a cannula (if applicable).

An intravenous access device (IV) will be inserted into a vein in your arm by a member of our team. The antibiotic pump will be attached to this IV device by our nursing team. Each pump lasts for 24 hours. You will be asked to return to the Trauma Assessment Unit (TAU) each day to check that your infection is improving.

When you come back to see us we will check the IV is still working, re-assess your infection, and make a decision whether another 24-hour pump is required. We aim to change your antibiotics from intravenous to oral form as soon as possible, ideally within a few days. If things are not getting better we may need to admit you to hospital.

If at any point you no longer wish to continue IV antibiotic treatment using the pump, please discuss it with our team. We will then work together to agree a suitable alternative treatment plan. This may include admission to hospital.

## Are there any risks?

As with any treatment, there are risks involved. The main potential risk would be due to mechanical issues with your antibiotic pump or failure of your peripheral cannula. This may present as leaking, swelling or discomfort around the cannula. Should this happen, we advise you to contact the virtual ward team for advice. You may be asked to return to the hospital for an assessment. Very occasionally patients can get problems directly related to the antibiotics they are taking. This can occur whether you are at home or in hospital.

By meeting our strict inclusion criteria, we do not expect your condition to deteriorate. However, if you become more unwell, then please contact the virtual ward team for advice as soon as possible.

## What to look out for?

If you develop any of the following symptoms, please contact the virtual ward team for advice using the details at the end of this leaflet:

- Feeling increasingly unwell
- Infection spreading beyond an area we have marked
- Rash
- Redness, swelling or pain around the IV access
- Fever, feeling hot/cold, high temperature, racing heart
- Swelling of lips and face / difficulty breathing
- Blocked IV line
- Diarrhoea

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If you feel unwell whilst at home with any of the above symptoms, please contact us on the numbers below and let us know so we can treat you.

**If you need help more urgently, call the NHS urgent care helpline on 111. In the event of an emergency please call 999 for an ambulance or go to your nearest Emergency Department (A&E).**

For a video describing the antibiotic pump infusion process, please visit:  
<https://tinyurl.com/antibioticpump>

**If you require any further information or have concerns about your treatment, please speak to one of the nursing staff or call either of the following numbers for your virtual ward team:**

**Trauma Assessment Unit (open 8.00am-8.00pm every day): 01225 824388**  
**Out of hours: RUH Switchboard 01225 428331 and request the orthopaedic on call doctor**

Trauma Assessment Unit (B1)  
Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Foundation Trust  
Combe Park, Bath, BA1 3NG  
Hospital switchboard: 01225 428331 | [www.ruh.nhs.uk](http://www.ruh.nhs.uk)

If you would like this leaflet in email form, large print, braille or another language, please contact the Patient Support and Complaints team on 01225 825656.

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#### Acknowledgment

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