

Antibiotic Prophylaxis for Suspected Variceal Bleeding in Patients with Liver Cirrhosis

Bacterial infections occur in about 20% of patients with cirrhosis with upper gastrointestinal bleeding within 48 hours of admission; another 50% will have an infection during their hospital stay. Antibiotic prophylaxis reduces the risk of infection and mortality in this patient group.

- Co-trimoxazole 960mg BD for 5 days
- Use IV while NBM and convert to oral when able
- If CrCl <30ml/min reduce dose to 480mg BD
- If co-trimoxazole is contraindicated: ciprofloxacin 500mg OD, if CrCl < 20ml/min reduce dose to 250mg OD (please note the MHRA fluoroquinolone warnings Jan 2024 [FQ Warnings AMG key points.pdf \(scot.nhs.uk\)](https://www.scot.nhs.uk/fq-warnings-amg-key-points.pdf) and ensure patients are counselled and provided with [MHRA patient information leaflet](#))

Agreed by: Gastroenterology Team/Antimicrobial Management Group Date: June 16 Updated: Mar 2025 Review Date: Mar 2028
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