

Wirral working together to improve hydration and prevent and improve treatment of UTIs

Prevention, improving diagnosis and management of urinary tract infections (UTI) in older people is a major priority for antimicrobial stewardship for Wirral Place. Wirral has a higher proportion of older people compared to the England average. Urinary tract infections cause a significant burden of infections in this population and a high rate of hospital admissions.

Wirral has the highest rates of prescribing of antibiotics for UTI in England and one of the highest rates of broad-spectrum antibiotic use of which cefalexin prescribing for UTIs makes up a significant proportion.

Implementation of this work and the introduction of the UTI screening tool to care and nursing homes will begin in June 2022.

What are we aiming to achieve?

- Reduce burden of UTIs in older people by improving hydration
- Reduce UTI related hospital admissions
- Eliminate urine dipping for UTI diagnosis in > 65 years and individuals with indwelling catheters in accordance with NICE and PHE guidance
- Improve urine sampling in line with NICE PHE guidance

How do we plan to do this?

- A united approach to diagnosis and treatment of UTIs across all organisations and services.
- Working together to improve hydration
- Hydration champions in care sectors to lead on training and promotion of hydration
- A Wirral wide UTI screening tool to aid diagnosis of UTI on symptoms to remove the need for urine dips. This will replace urine dips and aide referral conversations with GP practices and teletriage.
- Monitoring of testing samples to support improvement in urine sampling to confirm diagnosis and guide treatment choices. This will be available in a UTI dashboard accessible at practice level.
- Collaborative working to support projects to improve hydration.

Other benefits

Hydration is enormously important to the general health and wellbeing of older people. It is well known that dehydration in older people causes UTIs, pressure sores, cognitive impairment, dizziness and falls, constipation, kidney damage and leads to increased hospital admissions.

Many of these benefits are difficult to measure, however we will be monitoring the impact on hospital admissions and incidence of UTI.

How are we asking GP practices to support the project?

- Support care providers to use the UTI assessment tool and not to dip
- Monitor practice progress for improving UTI sampling
- Provide hydration advice for older people at risk of dehydration