

HANDLE  
WITH  
CARE!

## Secondary Care Prescriber's Checklist

# Antibiotics

### –Misuse leads to antibiotic resistance

Do not start antibiotics in the absence of evidence of bacterial infection

### START SMART:

- Start prompt effective treatment in patients with life-threatening infection
- Collect appropriate cultures before starting antibiotic therapy.
- Prescribe in accordance with local antibiotic policies/guidelines and resistance patterns
- Document indication(s), route, dose and duration for antibiotic prescription on prescription chart and in clinical notes
- Where antibiotics have been shown to be effective for surgical prophylaxis, give a single dose up to 60 minutes before incision
- Consult infection expert(s) and/or pharmacists if appropriate

### THEN FOCUS:

At 48 hours; **review the patient and make a clinical decision** “the **Antimicrobial Stewardship Decision**” on the need for on-going antibiotic therapy.

Does patient's condition and/or culture result(s) necessitate:

- Stop of antibiotic therapy (if no evidence of infection)
- Switch from intravenous to oral therapy
- Change: de-escalation/substitution/addition of agents
- Continuation - review again at 72 hours
- Outpatient Parenteral Antibiotic Therapy (OPAT)

Document Decision

Reference: ARHAI Antimicrobial Stewardship Guidance: *Start Smart – then Focus*.  
Available at: <http://www.dh.gov.uk/ab/ARHAI/index.htm> (launch date: 18.11.11)