

# Pharmacy First: Infected Insect Bites

NICE NG141 | NHS England Pharmacy First PGDs 4a/4b v1.1 (Oct 2025)

## REFER NOW: Red Flags

- Anaphylaxis or angio-oedema: A&E; immediately
- Bite/sting in mouth, throat, or around the eyes: A&E; immediately (airway/vision risk)
- Previous systemic allergic reaction to same bite type: A&E;
- Erythema migrans (expanding bullseye rash or bruise-like marking on darker skin): refer to GP urgently. Do not treat with flucloxacillin.
- Systemically unwell or sepsis: 999 or A&E;

ALL tick bites: refer to GP (Lyme disease risk). Do not treat under this PGD.

## CHECK: Eligibility

- Age 1 and over. Under 1: refer to GP.
- Bite at least 48 hours old. Under 48 hours with redness only: self-care, not infection.
- No liver disease or previous flucloxacillin-associated jaundice
- No known MRSA, no travel outside UK with insect-borne disease concern
- Check penicillin allergy and drug interactions (methotrexate, probenecid, voriconazole)

Requirement	What to assess	Notes
48+ hours since bite	Infection present or worsening 48 hours or more after the bite	Earlier redness is normal inflammation
3 or more signs of infection	Redness, pain/tenderness, swelling, warmth	Redness harder to see on darker skin: check warmth and tenderness
AND: spreading or discharge	Spreading redness beyond bite site OR pustular discharge present	Draw a border around erythema at assessment and document extent

Age	Dose	Penicillin allergy
1 to under 2 years	125mg four times daily	Clarithromycin by weight (BNFc)
2 to 9 years	250mg four times daily	Clarithromycin by weight (BNFc)
10 years and over / adults	500mg four times daily	Clarithromycin by weight (BNFc)

**Self-care and counselling:** Non-infected or early bites: paracetamol or ibuprofen, cold compress, topical hydrocortisone 1% (off-label, limited evidence). Flucloxacillin: take 1 hour before food or 2 hours after food (empty stomach). Warfarin: INR monitoring advised. Skin redness may take up to 10 days to fully resolve. Safety net: return immediately if spreading worsens, fever develops, or no improvement after completing the course.