

Pharmacy First: UTI in Women

NICE NG109 | NHS England Pharmacy First PGD 1a v1.3 (Oct 2025)

REFER NOW: Upper UTI and Red Flags

- Fever or chills in past 48 hours (even if resolved now): refer to GP same day urgently
- Loin pain or tenderness (back under ribs), rigors, nausea or vomiting: refer to GP same day urgently
- Temperature 37.9 degrees Celsius or above: refer to GP same day urgently
- Pregnancy or suspected pregnancy: refer to GP or sexual health urgently
- Suspected STI or abnormal vaginal discharge: refer to GP or sexual health

Sepsis: call 999.

CHECK: Commonly Missed Exclusions

- Age 16 to 64 only (under 16 or 65 and over: refer to GP)
- Known diabetes mellitus type 1 or type 2: EXCLUDED. Refer to GP.
- Any catheter use (indwelling, suprapubic, or self-catheterisation): EXCLUDED. Refer to GP.
- Any UTI antibiotic treatment in the past 3 months: EXCLUDED
- Recurrent UTI (2+ in past 6 months or 3+ in past 12 months): refer for urine culture
- Care home resident or UK hospitalisation more than 7 days in past 6 months: EXCLUDED
- eGFR below 45 (CKD stages 3b, 4, 5): EXCLUDED

Formulation	Dose	Notes
100mg modified release capsules (first line)	Twice daily for 3 days	Preferred. 6 capsules total.
50mg immediate release (if MR unavailable)	Four times daily for 3 days	Second line only. 12 tablets total.

✓ COUNSEL: Key Points

- Take with food or milk to reduce nausea
- Do NOT take OTC cystitis preparations (potassium citrate, sodium bicarbonate, sodium citrate) during the course: they reduce the antibacterial action of nitrofurantoin
- Urine may turn dark yellow or brown: expected and harmless
- Symptoms should improve within 48 hours: return if not improving

Safety netting and rare adverse effects: Return if symptoms worsen or systemic features develop (fever, loin pain, rigors). Stop nitrofurantoin and seek urgent advice if: new breathing difficulties or cough (pulmonary reaction), jaundice or dark urine (hepatic reaction), or tingling in the limbs (peripheral neuropathy). Complete the 3-day course even if symptoms improve.