

Drugs in Focus - Fusidic Acid for the Treatment of Infective Conjunctivitis

Key Messages:

- Acute bacterial conjunctivitis usually resolves spontaneously within 7 days of onset, without topical ocular antibiotic treatment. Keratitis is uncommon.
- Viral conjunctivitis is a self-limiting illness that resolves spontaneously but can last for up to 21 days.
- **For most people, use of a topical ocular antibiotic makes little difference to recovery from infective conjunctivitis.**
- If a topical ocular antibiotic is considered necessary, Wirral Antimicrobial Guidelines recommend Chloramphenicol eye drops/ointment 1st-line. Fusidic acid is an alternative as adverse effects may be more common.
- Chloramphenicol can be purchased OTC in pharmacy and is available from pharmacies participating in Wirral Minor Ailment Scheme – Think Pharmacy.
- **Fucithalmic®** eye drop brand has been **discontinued** and **Fusidic acid 1% modified release eye drops (5g)** is now only available in generic form at a cost **£29.06**.
- This should be reserved as a treatment option for patients who: are pregnant or breastfeeding, have a personal or family history of blood dyscrasias (such as aplastic anaemia), are intolerant of chloramphenicol or patients that may require assistance in applying drops e.g. young children or elderly people (Fusidic acid requires twice daily administration).

What are the issues?

- Fusidic acid eye drops should not be routinely used 1st line due to high cost and increased incidence of adverse effects.
- Fusidic eye drops 1% (5g) are now only available in generic form at a cost £29.06
- Fucithalmic will default to generic fusidic acid eye drops on EMIS clinical systems.

What are the costs?

- Fusidic acid 1% MR eye drops (5g) £29.06
- Chloramphenicol 0.5% eye drops (10mls) £1.53
- Chloramphenicol 1% eye ointment (4g) £1.98

References

1. Drug Tariff Nov 2015
2. Wirral Antimicrobial Guidelines and Management of Common Infections in Primary Care CMCSU 2015
3. NICE: CKS <http://cks.nice.org.uk/conjunctivitis-infective>