

07 November 2025

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TE WHATA KURA - NATIONAL ANTIBIOTIC GUIDELINES

Tēnā koē

Te Whare Piki Ora o Māhutonga – the Royal Australasian College of Surgeons (RACS) is the leading advocate for surgical standards, professionalism and surgical education in Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia. Our mission is *‘To improve access, equity, quality and delivery of surgical care that meets the needs of our diverse communities’*. Health advocacy is a central competency of a surgeon, and a core value of this College.

RACS is pleased to support your antimicrobial stewardship project in developing Te Whata Kura as a resource to help achieve effective, equitable and sustainable use of antibiotics. We agree with your characterisation of antibiotics as a taonga. We are also working to address inequities in antibiotic use.

Thank you for consulting RACS on the draft electronic version of Te Whatu Kura. I shared your email and links with the surgeons on our RACS Aotearoa New Zealand National Committee, asking them to provide feedback within the app and also to us for feedback to you.

The general feedback was this will be a valuable resource; it is clear, simple to navigate and on point. We expect you will work to align the information with the Health Pathways made available to general practitioners to guide disease management and referrals.

We also provide below some specific clinical feedback where changes are needed.

1. We suggest adding the ability to search the Guidelines by procedure as these are not always pigeonholed by specialty. For example, General surgeons and Plastic surgeons both undertake breast procedures, Otolaryngologists and General surgeons both undertake neck surgery.
2. Further, the Guidelines should be structured:
 - with buttons for specialties, for example:
 - Cardiothoracic Surgery
 - General Surgery
 - Neurosurgery
 - Orthopaedic Surgery
 - Otolaryngology Head and Neck Surgery
 - Paediatric Surgery
 - Urology
 - Vascular Surgery
 - with a sub-specialty dropdown for EACH of those:
 - Benign
 - Malignant
 - Acute
 - Elective
 - and EXTRA dropdowns for the large specialties, for example for General Surgery:
 - Endocrine
 - Breast
 - Upper GI and bariatric
 - Colorectal
 - Skin.



3. The Guidelines recommend antibiotic prophylaxis for hernia repair despite limited evidence: https://academic.oup.com/bjs/article/111/Supplement_6/znae163.063/7702934
4. Fournier's gangrene is a life threatening issue so must be added.
5. The following conditions are not included and should be:
 - hydatid liver cysts
 - head and neck surgery without malignancy - thyroidectomy or parathyroidectomy
 - oesophageal candidiasis (only oral candidiasis is included).
6. It is not clear what is intended when an antibiotic is suggested and then the notes say it may not be indicated for this. For example, with simple skin excisions under local anaesthetic it says to give an oral antibiotic, and in small letters in the additional notes says this is not required for simple excisions. It would be easy to miss this when looking at the information quickly. Similarly for appendicitis where seven days of antibiotics are recommended, and only in the small print does it say this is only if you are not considering surgery.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this submission, please contact Dr Sarah Rennie FRACS, Surgical Advisor with RACS at sarah.rennie@surgeons.org. We would be pleased to contribute to further work in this area.

Nāku noa, nā

**Ros Pochin
Chair
Aotearoa New Zealand National Committee**

RACS represents more than 8300 surgeons and 1300 surgical Trainees and Specialist International Medical Graduates across Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia. We are the accredited training provider in nine surgical specialities. Surgeons are also required by RACS and Te Kaunihera Rata o Aotearoa - Medical Council of Aotearoa, to continue with surgical education and review of their practice throughout their surgical careers.