

# ANTIMICROBIAL STEWARDSHIP STRATEGY: INTRAVENOUS TO ORAL CONVERSION



Promoting the use of oral (PO) antimicrobial agents instead of intravenous (IV) administration when clinically indicated.

REQUIRED RESOURCING:  
**LOW**



## Implementation Considerations

### Prioritize Oral Therapy:

The Association of Medical Microbiology and Infectious Disease Canada recommends that IV forms of highly bioavailable antimicrobials should not be routinely used in individuals with a functioning gastrointestinal tract.

**Standardize IV-to-PO Switch:** In cases where IV therapy is initially appropriate, IV to PO conversion can be supported by a policy or guideline for switching to an oral route of administration after patient assessment and when certain clinical criteria are met (e.g., improving clinically, able to tolerate and absorb oral medications).

**Enable Switches:** This can be facilitated by automatic substitution policies or medical directives (especially for highly bioavailable agents) or performed on a case-by-case basis in consultation with the prescriber when patients meet specific clinical parameters. [Clinical decision support](#) tools such as automated reports and alerts can be used by clinicians to identify and assess candidates for IV to PO stepdown.



## Impact

IV to PO conversion is safe and effective with numerous benefits including reduced complications and harms associated with IV catheters (e.g., infection, thrombus formation), shorter length of hospital stay, decreased pharmacy and nursing workload and lower treatment costs.

This strategy also supports planetary health as oral therapy has a lower carbon footprint than IV antimicrobials.

## Sources

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