

## Diphtheria

### DIPHThERIA ANTITOXIN

Product characteristics and dosages vary between different manufacturers so caution is advised in checking the product information. Two different diphtheria anti-toxins are currently stocked:

Dispensed in vials of: 10,000 iu in 10ml (Instituto Butantan) or 6.58ml (CSL Ltd)

#### Indications

1. In suspected diphtheria cases (Algorithm 1, page 8-2),
2. For treatment of confirmed cases (Algorithm 1, page 8-2, and Algorithm 2, page 8-3).

#### Notes:

Diphtheria antitoxin is no longer used in the UK for diphtheria prophylaxis. Unimmunised contacts are given the vaccine and antibiotic prophylaxis.

#### Dosage: This depends on the product.

Dosage of diphtheria anti-toxin manufactured by Instituto Butantan is 20-40,000IU for mild and moderate cases and 40-80,000 IU for severe cases.

Dosage for diphtheria anti-toxin from CSL Ltd is as follows:

Type of diphtheria	Dosage (units) (½ dose <10 yrs)	Route
Chronic nasal diphtheria	2-4000	IM
Tonsillar diphtheria of moderate severity, the membrane being limited to one side	10-14 000	IM
Tonsillar diphtheria of moderate severity, with membrane on both sides	16-20 000	IM
laryngeal diphtheria of moderate severity in a child	30 000	IM
Severe diphtheria with membrane spreading beyond the tonsillar fossa on one side	40 000	IM
Severe diphtheria with membrane spreading beyond the tonsillar fossa on both sides	60 000	IM
Grave diphtheria with extensive membrane on the palate associated with palatal and faucal oedema, cervical adenitis and peri-adenitis (bull-neck diphtheria)	150 000	part IV and part IM

Nb: Antitoxin is probably of no value for cutaneous disease, although some authorities use 20,000 to 40,000 units of antitoxin because toxic sequelae have been reported.

#### Notes:

Test with a trial dose to exclude hypersensitivity to horse serum (from which it is derived) should precede its use.

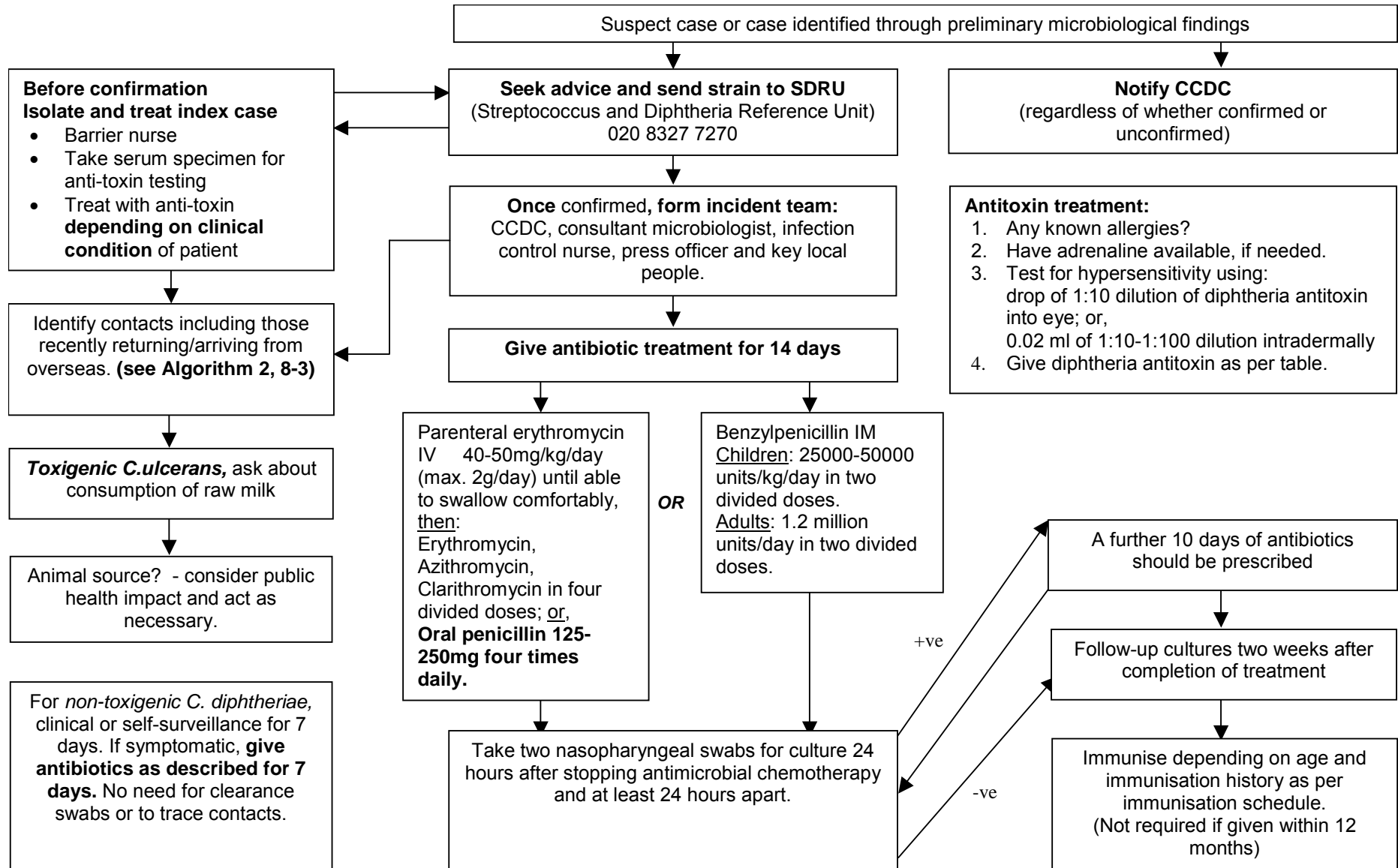
- Test for hypersensitivity using:

drop of 1:10 dilution of diphtheria antitoxin into eye; or,  
0.02 ml of 1:10-1:100 dilution intradermally

It may be given intramuscularly or intravenously, the dosage depending on the clinical condition of the patient.

- Have adrenaline available, if needed.
- Give diphtheria antitoxin as per table.

**1: Algorithm for the Management of the Index Case with Toxigenic *C. Diphtheriae* & Toxigenic *C. Ulcerans***



**2: Algorithm for the Management of Contact Cases in Diphtheria**

