Why not roxithromycin?

Clinical pearls for lower respiratory tract infections (LRTIs) in primary care

Acute bronchitis is cough, often with mucus production, without evidence of pneumonia, in a patient without underlying chronic lung disease. **Most cases are caused by** respiratory viruses so antibiotic therapy is not indicated.

Cough improves within 4 weeks in around 90% of patients but can occasionally take up to 8 weeks to fully resolve.

Consider pneumonia **if there is tachypnoea, tachycardia, persistent fever, rigors, reduced oxygen saturations, or focal crepitations/crackles that do not clear with coughing.**

Community-acquired pneumonia in adults suitable for community management

Pneumococcal resistance to penicillin remains low in Australia, while resistance to macrolides and tetracyclines is higher.

First-line: Amoxicillin 1 g orally, 8-hourly for 5 days, depending on clinical response.

In patients with penicillin hypersensitivity or if atypical pneumonia is suspected use:

- Doxycycline 100 mg orally, 12-hourly or
- Clarithromycin 500 mg orally, 12-hourly for 5 days

If not improving with monotherapy, reassess diagnosis, severity and complications before considering dual therapy (amoxicillin plus either doxycycline or clarithromycin). Before prescribing check allergies, contraindications and drug interactions.

Why not roxithromycin?

Therapeutic Guidelines (TG) have not recommended roxithromycin for > 10 years. When a macrolide is indicated for a LRTI in primary care, TG recommends use of clarithromycin. See summary of macrolide properties below.

	Azithromycin	Clarithromycin	Erythromycin	Roxithromycin
Doses per day	One	Two	Two to four	One or two
CYP450 interactions	No	Yes +++	Yes ++	No
Other 'kinetic interactions	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
QT prolongation	Yes	Yes +	Yes +	Yes -
GI tolerability	Good	Good	Poor	Good
TG indications	Several	Several	Limited	None
Formulations	Tablet Oral liquid Injection	Tablet Oral liquid	Tablet Capsule Oral liquid Injection	Tablet
Information sources: Australian Medicines Handbook, Therapeutic Guidelines, Credible Meds				

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