

Date: 3/13/20

Subject: Revision to UMHS Pharyngitis guideline: laboratory testing

A change in laboratory testing by MLabs for Group A streptococcus (GAS) has been incorporated into an interim revision of the UMHS clinical guideline for Pharyngitis. The most recent version of the Pharyngitis guideline is now available at <http://www.uofmhealth.org/provider/clinical-care-guidelines>. The UMHS guidelines can also be accessed on the UMHS Clinical Home Page.

What's New

New laboratory test for GAS rather than culture. The preferred laboratory test for Group A streptococcus (GAS) is now polymerase chain reaction (PCR) process rather than culture. PCR specificity is 95% and sensitivity is 97%. This sensitivity is slightly higher than culture. PCR results are available in one day, compared to two days for culture. MLabs now tests oropharyngeal swabs for GAS using PCR – cultures are no longer performed.

Key Aspects

Reduce indiscriminate use of antibiotics for those who will not benefit – most sore throats are viral.

- Test for strep only in patients with suggestive signs and symptoms (e.g., severe sore throat, fever, tender anterior cervical lymphadenopathy, red pharynx with tonsillar swelling, no cough).
- If a rapid strep screen GAS test is negative
 - In patients < age 16, confirm with a laboratory (PCR) test. Patients in this age range have a higher risk of acute rheumatic fever due to GAS pharyngitis.
 - In patients ≥ age 16, do NOT confirm with a laboratory test.

Treatment for GAS pharyngitis.

- Recommended drugs, doses, and costs have been updated. (See Tables 4, 6.)
- Oral penicillin is still the first-line option.
- Once-daily oral amoxicillin is also a good option. Note that the dosing is not the same as for otitis media. (See Table 4.)

If you have questions about these revisions or other aspects of the UMHS Ambulatory Care Clinical Guidelines Program, please contact us via email ClinCareGuidelines@med.umich.edu or phone 734-936-9771.

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