

Appropriate Testing for Pharyngitis (CWP)

Most respiratory illnesses characterized by congestion, cough, or pharyngeal pain are caused by viruses, not bacteria.ⁱ Prescribing antibiotics, especially when no bacterial infection has been confirmed, can lead to risky side effects and even antibiotic resistance, which ultimately increases healthcare costs.ⁱⁱ You should perform a strep test (rapid assay or throat culture) as an indicator for appropriate antibiotic use among all patients with a sore throat.

APPLICABLE LINES OF BUSINESS

- Commercial
- Medicare Advantage

MEASURE DESCRIPTION/DEFINITION

Percentage of episodes for members 3 years and older where the member was diagnosed with pharyngitis, dispensed an antibiotic and received group A streptococcus (strep) test for the episode.ⁱⁱⁱ

EXCLUSIONS

Members who had:

- A claim/encounter with any diagnosis for a comorbid condition during the 12 months prior to or on the Episode Date.
- A new or refill prescription for an antibiotic medication filled 30 days prior to the Episode Date or was active on the Episode Date.
- A claim/encounter with a competing diagnosis on or 3 days after the Episode Date.
- Not received antibiotics on or up to three days after the Episode Date.

INFORMATION THAT PATIENT CLAIMS SHOULD INCLUDE

Diagnosis Description	ICD-10 ^{iv} Codes
Acute pharyngitis	J02.8, J02.9
Acute tonsillitis	J03.00, J03.01, J03.80, J03.81, J03.90, J03.91
Streptococcal pharyngitis	J02.0

Procedure Description	CPT ^v codes
Group A strep test	87070, 87071, 87081, 87430, 87650, 87651, 87652, 87880

INFORMATION THAT PATIENT MEDICAL RECORDS SHOULD INCLUDE

Document the performance of a rapid strep test or the patient's and/or caregiver's refusal of testing in medical records.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS

Educate about viral infections

- Often patients or caregivers want an antibiotic to treat their symptoms even if they test negative for a bacterial infection. Explain that an antibiotic can't treat a viral infection and unnecessary use of antibiotics can build up antibiotic drug resistance in the patient.
- Refer to their diagnosis as a sore throat due to a cold virus as patients tend to associate this label with a less-frequent need for antibiotics.

Educate about ways to treat symptoms

- Over-the-counter pain medications like non-steroidal analgesics and/or acetaminophen
- Cool-mist vaporizer and nasal sprays for congestion
- Eating ice chips
- Throat spray or lozenges for sore throats for older children and adults
- Extra rest and fluids

Educate about prevention

- Wash hands frequently
- Make sure healthy family members and sick family members aren't sharing eating utensils and drinking glasses
- Make sure toothbrushes don't sit next to each other in the same container
- Thoroughly wash an infected child's toys in hot water with disinfectant soap
- Keep a child with a sore throat out of school or daycare until they're fever free for 24 hours or until symptoms improve
- Visit the Own Your Health WA website to learn more at www.ownyourhealthwa.org.

ⁱ <https://www.choosingwisely.org/societies/american-academy-of-pediatrics/>

ⁱⁱ <https://www.choosingwisely.org/patient-resources/colds-flu-and-other-respiratory-illnesses-in-adults/>

ⁱⁱⁱ National Committee for Quality Assurance. *HEDIS® 2020 Volume 2 Technical Specifications for Health Plans* (2019), 128-132

^{iv} ICD-10-CM created by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), under authorization by the World Health Organization. World Health Organization-copyright holder

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