

Rheumatic Fever Prevention Programme

Sore Throat Management

Purpose

Deliver a nurse-led free to the patient throat swab and treat service, to the high-risk population who present with or have undeclared pharyngitis;(suspected Group A streptococcal (GAS) throat infections).

Introduction and Background

Acute Rheumatic Fever (ARF) autoimmune response to an untreated Group A Streptococcus (GAS) throat infection and can be prevented by prompt diagnosis of a GAS throat infection and treatment with a full course of appropriate antibiotics.

Missing a diagnosis of rheumatic fever may lead to long-term health consequences, including cardiac damage and premature death.

Most sore throats are viral, but between 7% and 37% can be caused by a GAS.

1% to 3% of untreated or incorrectly treated group A streptococcus sore throats will go on to develop rheumatic fever, a reaction which is thought to be autoimmune. People at higher risk of rheumatic fever in New Zealand are:

- Māori or Pacific peoples, 20 times and 40 times higher respectively
- 3 to 35 years (and particularly children 5 to 15 years)
- Living in lower socioeconomic areas
- Living in overcrowded housing
- Those with a history of acute rheumatic fever

Rheumatic fever usually occurs 14 to 21 days after initial untreated GAS infection but can be more rapid. It can affect joints, the heart, skin, and cause neurological symptoms and is preventable by treating the initial GAS sore throat with correct antibiotics.

Primary Care has an important role in asking about and managing sore throats. Mōhio Express has a prompt to ask about a sore throat in the eligible population – “consider a sore throat”

Please note that this is NOT a clinical guideline. Please remain vigilant for people presenting with rheumatic fever symptoms. Any person with suspected rheumatic fever should be urgently referred to hospital as per Auckland Regional HealthPathways.

For further information see; [rheumatic fever](#) Healthpathway and [Sore Throat pathway](#).

Equity

The Auckland PHO Rheumatic Fever Prevention Programme; (Sore Throat Management) ensures that there is a system and funding in place that targets the high-risk population.

Service Delivery & Business Rules

Eligibility Criteria for this Programme

- The patient can be enrolled and casual
- **Aged 4 – 19 years with two or more of the following:**
 - ↳ Māori or Pacific
 - ↳ Living in a high risk/quintile 5 community
 - ↳ Any family history of ARF or rheumatic heart disease and/or
 - ↳ Present with a sore throat OR has undeclared clinical pharyngitis (i.e., an inflamed throat and/or tonsils with or without exudate)

Case Finding

In addition to providing a nurse-led funded sore throat swab and treat service to Māori and Pacific children and young people aged 4 – 19 years, Practice Nurses and GPs should look for signs of a sore throat (redness and/or pus in the throat) when Pacific children aged 4 – 12 years present for other conditions. Swab and treat as indicated at no cost to the patient.

Household Contacts of an at-risk child with a GAS + sore throat

A funded throat swab and treat service includes:

- a. Any symptomatic 3 – 35-year-old household contacts aged 3 – 35 years with a GAS+ sore throat (as above)
 - b. And as per clinical variations, all household contacts aged 3 – 35 years with:
 - i. 3 or more GAS+ infections in the preceding 3 months, OR
 - ii. a personal history of rheumatic fever, OR
 - iii. a family history of rheumatic fever.
1. **Management** - See [Auckland Region Health Pathways Sore Throat pathway](#)
 2. Consider implementing the following standing nurse orders into your practice:
 - [Empiric Antibiotic Management of Sore Throat for People at High Risk of Developing Rheumatic Fever](#)
 - [Benzathine Benzylpenicillin Tetrahydrate and Lidocaine 2% \(Lignocaine\) IM injection for the Prevention of Acute Rheumatic Fever](#)

COVID-19

- Sore throats are a common symptom of COVID-19 and symptomatic people need to be advised to be tested;
- See [COVID-19 Testing](#) for further information.
- [Wearing PPE](#)
- COVID-19 Claiming – information to be added
- [Decision Tree for Primary Care to Assess Covid-19 Testing Funding Eligibility](#)

Healthy Housing

Consider referring whānau to [Noho Āhuru - Healthy Homes](#) which is a free service aiming to support low-income families to have warmer, drier and healthier homes.

[The service](#) provides interventions such as ventilation, carpets, heating, curtains, bedding along with budgeting advice, education on keeping houses warm and dry, minor repairs etc.

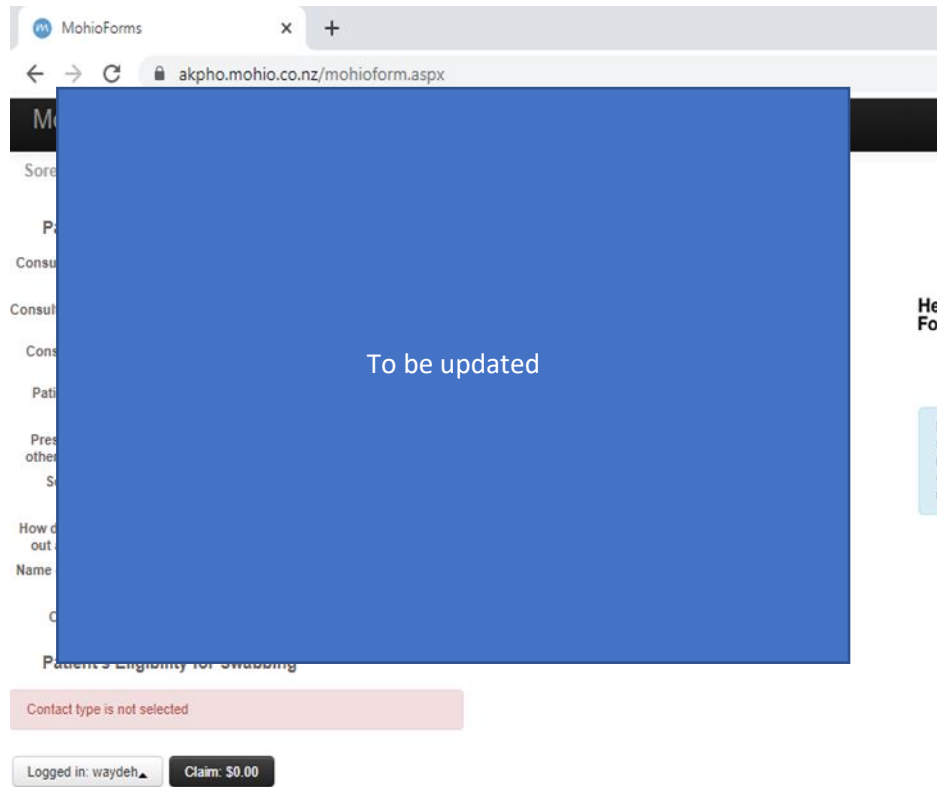
Further information and referral form can be found here: [Healthy Homes Initiative](#)

Funding

- Claims can be initiated by a Registered Nurse/Nurse Practitioner or GP
- No co-payment can be charged to the patient.

Enrolled	\$18.50
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4 – 19 years• Maori/Pasifika/Quintile 5• Has sore throat or undeclared pharyngitis	
<u>Case Finding Symptomatic 3- 35-year-old household members of an at-risk child with a GAS+ sore throat (as above)</u>	\$18.50
If Bicillin given	+ \$18.50

Mōhio Form



References

Endorsed by

<https://assets.heartfoundation.org.nz/documents/shop/heart-healthcare/non-stock-resources/sore-throat-algorithm.pdf?1621137044>

Auckland PHO Senior Management Team on date 8 June 2023

For further Information contact

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