Tonsillitis

Tonsillitis, or inflammation of the tonsils, is a medical condition caused either by a virus or a streptococcal infection of the throat. Patients with this condition may experience soreness of the throat and difficulty swallowing. A throat culture is used to determine whether the inflammation is due to a bacteria. If a patient’s throat culture is positive for a streptococcal infection, antibiotics will be prescribed to treat the infection. In patients who have recurrent tonsillitis or when inflammation of the tonsils causes airway obstruction, a tonsillectomy is indicated. Patients who are diagnosed with ‘strep throat’, or tonsillitis caused by a streptococcal infection should be monitored closely for post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis and rheumatic heart disease.



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Cause

Bacterial or Viral Inflammation
Bacteria and Virus In-flames
Tonsillitis can be caused by a virus or a streptococcal infection of the throat. The tonsils will be enlarged in patients with this condition, and in severe cases, the tonsils may become so swollen that they compromise the patient’s airway.

Assessment

Sore Throat
Spitting Flames
Inflammation of the tonsils can cause soreness of the throat. Pain and soreness in the throat may also radiate to the neck or ears.

Dysphagia
Dice-fajita
Patients with tonsillitis may complain of difficulty swallowing. Dysphagia, can be attributed to inflammation of the tonsils and soreness of the throat.

Interventions

Throat Culture
Throat Swab with Petri-dish
A throat culture is performed to determine whether inflammation of the tonsils is due to a streptococcal infection. A throat culture sample is collected using a sterile cotton swab.

Antibiotics
ABX-guy
If a patient’s throat culture is positive for a streptococcal infection, antibiotics will be prescribed to treat the infection.

Tonsillectomy
Tassels removed by scalpel
A tonsillectomy, or removal of the palatine tonsils, is indicated in patients who have recurrent tonsillitis or when inflammation of the tonsils causes airway obstruction.

Considerations

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Often Streptococcus

Stripper

Though tonsillitis can be caused by a virus, this condition is often the result of a streptococcal infection. If a patient’s throat culture is positive for a streptococcal infection, antibiotics will be prescribed to treat the infection.

Monitor for Acute Glomerulonephritis

Monitor Acute-angle Glow-mare with Kidneys-on-fire

Patients who are diagnosed with ‘strep throat’, or tonsillitis caused by a streptococcal infection, should be monitored for post-streptococcal glomerulonephritis. Signs and symptoms of this condition include hypertension, swelling of the eyelids and face, hematuria, and decreased urine output. Patients should seek medical attention immediately if they experience any of these symptoms.

Monitor for Rheumatic Heart Disease

Monitor Roman Heart

If left untreated, a streptococcal infection of the throat may lead to rheumatic fever, and in some cases, rheumatic heart disease. Symptoms of rheumatic fever disease typically manifest two to four weeks after an infection of the throat and include fever, joint pain, and rash. In patients with rheumatic heart disease, there is permanent damage to the heart valves.

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