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IN THIS ISSUE (starts on next page)

In Brief: Extended-Release Amoxicillin for Strep Throat .................................................................  p 17

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IN BRIEF

Extended-Release Amoxicillin for Strep Throat

The FDA has approved an extended-release formulation of amoxicillin (Moxatag – MiddleBrook) for once-daily treatment of pharyngitis or tonsillitis caused by Streptococcus pyogenes in adults and children ≥12 years old. Approval was based on an unpublished study that found once-daily treatment with Moxatag 775 mg for 10 days non-inferior to penicillin V 250 mg four times a day for 10 days in eradication of S. pyogenes.

For decades, the drug of choice for oral treatment of streptococcal pharyngitis in adolescents and adults has been penicillin V 250 mg taken three or four times a day.1 Amoxicillin is equally effective, but penicillin is generally recommended because of its narrower spectrum. In adults, immediate-release amoxicillin is usually dosed 375-500 mg two to three times a day, but giving it in a higher dose (750-1000 mg) once a day appears to be equally effective for treatment of strep throat.2-4

Each Moxatag tablet contains 775 mg of amoxicillin divided into one immediate-release and two delayed-release components. Compared to a similar dose of immediate-release amoxicillin suspension, absorption of amoxicillin from the new formulation is slower, resulting in a lower peak serum concentration, but the elimination half-life and amoxicillin exposure (AUC) are similar. S. pyogenes is susceptible to these serum concentrations, but they may be too low to treat other types of infections.

A 10-day supply of Moxatag is expected to cost about $100 compared to $4 for a similar course of penicillin V or immediate-release amoxicillin.5 There is no good reason to prescribe Moxatag.

5. Retail cost at one Walgreens pharmacy. February 27, 2009.