

WAC 246-100-202 Prophylactic Treatment for Gonococcal Ophthalmia Neonatorum in Newborns

October 2009



Overview

Routine eye prophylaxis for newborn infants against gonococcal ophthalmia is a standard procedure in perinatal centers around the world. Gonococcal ophthalmia is an eye disease that has a usual onset between the second and fifth days of life. It was a common cause of blindness in infancy prior to the introduction of routine eye prophylaxis.

In July of 2009 the rule language was approved by the State Board of Health. In late August the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) declared a national shortage of erythromycin ophthalmic ointment and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued new guidance that includes alternate recommendations for extreme situations where erythromycin ophthalmic ointment is not available. The rule language approved by the board this summer does not reflect the CDC's guidance for shortage situations.

Summary of Recommended Language Revision

This draft clarifies the rule by allowing health care providers to follow CDC guidance if FDA declares a national shortage of ophthalmic agents. The change will help assure the rule is responsive to national drug shortages, such as the current situation.

Stakeholder Feedback

Department of Health staff sent the revised draft rule text to the interested parties list. The department did not receive any comment opposing the new text referencing the CDC guidance.

For additional information contact:

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