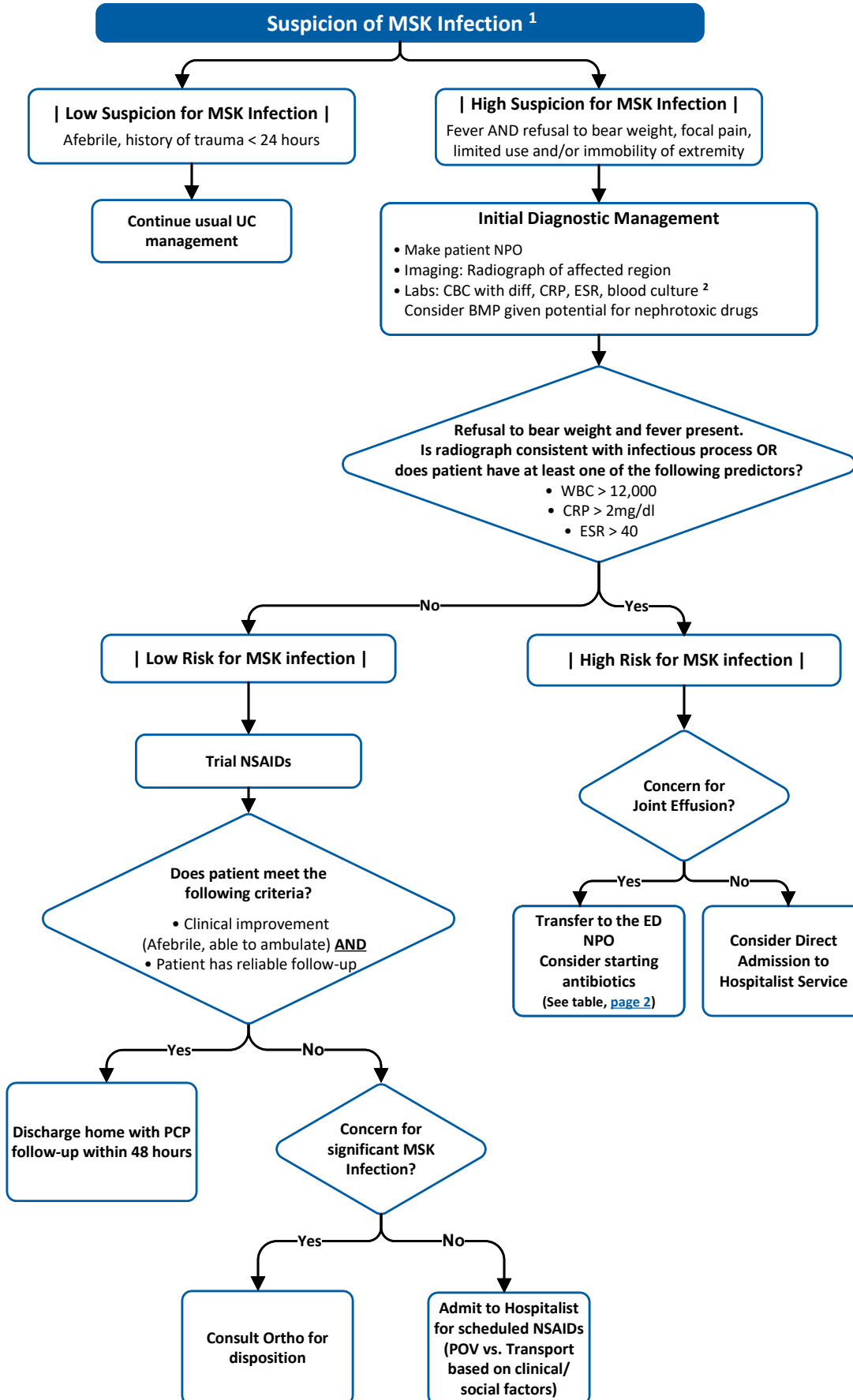


Musculoskeletal (MSK) Infection pathway: Urgent Care Management

November 2025



Inclusion Criteria

- 6 months to 21 years
- Suspicion of acute musculoskeletal infection (Symptoms less than 2 weeks): osteomyelitis, septic arthritis, pyomyositis

Exclusion Criteria

- Infants less than 6 months
- Chronic and subacute musculoskeletal infection (Symptoms greater than 2 weeks)
- Postoperative infection
- Penetrating trauma
- Patient with hardware
- Myelomeningocele
- Chronic recurrent multifocal osteomyelitis (CRMO)
- Immunocompromised
- Sickle Cell Disease

1 Suspicion of MSK Infection

Obtain the following:

History

Pain, fever, inability to bear weight, gait disturbance/limp, limited use or immobility of extremity or spine, travel to endemic Lyme areas

Physical Exam

Limited range of motion, swelling, tenderness, warmth at site, fever, erythema, psoas sign

2 Blood Cultures

- Obtain maximum allowable blood culture volume per [Policy 4.26](#)
- Send blood culture by courier to hospital for any patient being transferred

Vancomycin is not available at Urgent Care Centers

IV Antibiotic Table

For treatment of Acute Hematogenous Osteomyelitis and Septic Arthritis

These recommendations are the same for all patients, regardless of vaccination status

Diagnosis	Common Pathogens	Preferred Drug(s)	Alternative Drug(s) for B-lactam allergy	Minimal Duration	Comments
Acute Osteomyelitis	MSSA, MRSA, <i>S. Pyogenes</i> , <i>K. kingae</i> (age <4 years)	Well-Appearing: <u><4 years:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cefazolin 50 mg/kg IV every 8 hours (max 2000 mg/dose) OR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cephalexin 50 mg/kg/dose PO every 8 hours (max 1000 mg/dose) <u>≥4 years:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clindamycin 13 mg/kg/dose PO/IV three times daily (max 600 mg/dose) 	Cephalosporin Allergy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clindamycin* 13 mg/kg/dose PO/IV every 8 hours (max 600 mg/dose) <i>*PO Clindamycin is preferred due to high bioavailability for patients able to tolerate PO</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncomplicated: <u>3 weeks</u> Complicated (<i>bacteremia, slow resolution, operative drainage procedure</i>): <u>4 weeks</u> Severe Infection (<i>persistent bacteremia (>72 hours after appropriate antibiotics), multiple drainage/debridement procedures</i>): <u>4 weeks from negative cultures, up to 6 weeks</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ID consult is recommended In clinically stable patients, consider delaying antibiotics if bone biopsy is planned. Cefazolin is recommended in almost all patients with penicillin or amoxicillin allergies, due to low risk of cross-reactivity. Avoid Cefazolin in patients with cephalosporin allergies.
		Ill-Appearing: <u>All ages:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cefazolin 50 mg/kg IV every 8 hours (max 2000 mg/dose) PLUS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vancomycin with Pharmacokinetic Consult (See Pharmacokinetic Policy for dosing recommendations) 			
Septic Arthritis	MSSA, MRSA, <i>S. Pyogenes</i> , <i>S. pneumoniae</i> , <i>K. kingae</i> (age <4 years)	Well-Appearing: <u><4 years:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cefazolin 50 mg/kg IV every 8 hours (max 2000 mg/dose) <u>≥4 years:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clindamycin 13 mg/kg/dose PO/IV every 8 hours (max 600 mg/dose) 	Cephalosporin Allergy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clindamycin* 13 mg/kg/dose PO/IV every 8 hours (max 600 mg/dose) <i>*PO Clindamycin is preferred due to high bioavailability for patients able to tolerate PO</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uncomplicated: <u>2 weeks</u> Complicated (<i>bacteremia, slow resolution, multiple joint washout procedures, concern for adjacent osteomyelitis</i>): <u>3 weeks</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ID consult is recommended
		Ill-Appearing: <u>All ages:</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cefazolin 50 mg/kg IV every 8 hours (max 2000 mg/dose) PLUS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vancomycin with Pharmacokinetic Consult (See Pharmacokinetic Policy for dosing recommendations) 			