

## #16 - ER TIP: Outpatient Antimicrobial Therapy (OPAT) Clinic

Last week I saw a patient with a tensely swollen ear and red inflamed cheek that had started 3 days earlier after an insect bite. The skin was painful to touch and she had a low grade fever. She had been started on oral antibiotics 2 days before at a walk-in clinic and was following up with me because she wasn't improving. I knew she needed IV antibiotics but she begged me not to send her to the ER. A phone call to one of our local Infectious Disease specialists put us both at ease!

### *TIP:*

CALL the Hospital Switchboard (250-370-8000) and ask for Infectious Disease (ID) at the OPAT clinic between 7:30 and 11:30 am or ask for the on-call ID outside of those hours. ID has asked that physicians call the clinic first to discuss the patient, before sending in a referral.

Often, discussing the case by phone can allow for evaluation about whether the patient needs to be seen TODAY (which may mean a first dose through the ER if outside clinic hours) or if they can wait until the next morning to be assessed and treated at the OPAT clinic.

After discussing your patient with the ID physician, you can send a referral letter by fax to 250-370-8638.

The clinic is open **seven** days a week from 7:30-11:30am; however, new referrals are not taken on weekends or statutory holidays. Patients need to arrive at the clinic at 7:30am for their first appointment, but subsequently they are given scheduled appointment times.

A pamphlet you can use for your patients can be found at [http://www.viha.ca/NR/ronlyres/C4182C38-AF28-488B-A265-394993B7EA04/0/OPAT\\_Patient\\_Instructions.pdf](http://www.viha.ca/NR/ronlyres/C4182C38-AF28-488B-A265-394993B7EA04/0/OPAT_Patient_Instructions.pdf)

### *TRICK: Did you know?*

OPAT is also the contact point for outpatients who may be eligible for home IV therapy. This program provides assessment, education, and support for patients undergoing intravenous therapy who could recover at home. For more information or to refer a patient, call the OPAT clinic physician at 250-370-8000.