Algorithm: Acute Otitis Media With Treatment Failure

Symptoms after 48-72 hours of initial therapy?
- Ongoing moderate or severe otalgia, OR
- Temperature ≥39°C AND
- Unimproved otologic exam*

*Note: Middle ear effusion may persist for weeks or months after an AOM episode.

Consider watchful waiting for the next 48-72 hours

YES

Change antibiotics. Begun on amoxicillin initially?

YES

First line: Amoxicillin/clavulanate ES 90 mg/kg divided BID

NO

Alternatives include:
- Ceftriaxone IM/IV × 3 days
- Clindamycin with or without cefdinir, cefixime, or cefuroxime

NO

Ongoing treatment failure after 48-72 hours?

Consider tympanocentesis, consultation with Otolaryngology and/or Infectious Diseases