

Title: Prophylactic antibiotics before dental work

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Date: 03/01/2010

Key words: antibiotics, dental procedures, prophylactic, prevention, bacterial endocarditis

Abstract: Physicians often prescribe antibiotics to patients before dental work to prevent bacterial endocarditis. There is not currently good evidence to support this practice, especially in patients who are at low or moderate risk of developing bacterial endocarditis; however, there may be some individual patient benefit for those who are at highest risk.

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## Should I get antibiotics before going to the dentist?

- During dental procedures, bacteria from the mouth can enter the bloodstream. This can happen anytime there is bleeding during dental work.
- The bacteria in the bloodstream can then travel to the heart and cause an infection called bacterial endocarditis (BE).
- Sometimes, antibiotics are given to patients before they see their dentist in order to prevent BE. Usually the antibiotic used is called Amoxicillin.
- Most people are not at high risk for developing an infection after dental work and do not need antibiotics before going to the dentist. However, some people are at a higher risk for BE and should take antibiotics before having dental work done.



## What is bacterial endocarditis?

- Bacterial endocarditis (BE) is an infection inside the heart.
- Bacteria from the bloodstream can travel to and infect the heart, causing BE. Anyone can get BE, but some people may be more at risk for it than others.

## Who is at the most risk for bacterial endocarditis?

People who have the following are at the highest risk to develop BE after dental work:

- An artificial heart valve, either mechanical or a valve obtained from animals or humans
- A heart valve that has undergone surgical repair
- If you have ever had BE in the past
- Any congenital heart abnormality, meaning any heart condition that you were born with, even if your heart condition has been fixed.

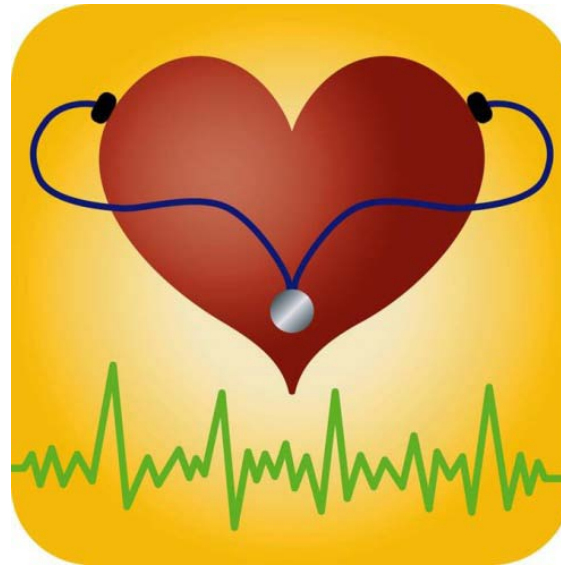
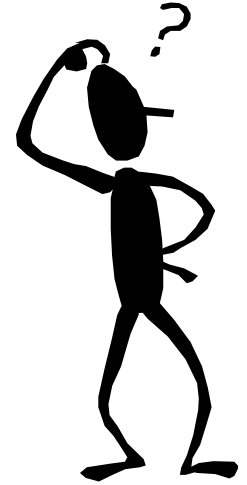
If you have any of the above conditions, you may have an increased risk for BE and should talk to your doctor or dentist about taking antibiotics before having any dental work done.

## Where can I get more information?

<http://www.webmd.com/>

<http://medlineplus.gov/>

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/>



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Spring 2010