

# Guideline on Antibiotic Prophylaxis for Dental Patients at Risk for Infection

Originating Committee  
Clinical Affairs Committee

Review Council  
Council on Clinical Affairs

Adopted  
1990

Revised  
1991, 1997, 1999, 2002, 2005

## Purpose

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) recognizes that numerous medical conditions predispose patients to bacteremia-induced infections. Because it is not possible to predict when a susceptible patient will develop an infection, prophylactic antibiotics are recommended when these patients undergo procedures most likely to produce bacteremia. This guideline is intended to help practitioners make appropriate decisions regarding antibiotic prophylaxis for dental patients at risk.

## Methods

This guideline is based on a review of current dental and medical literature pertaining to postprocedural bacteremia-induced infections. A MEDLINE search was performed using the keywords "subacute bacterial endocarditis", "bacteremia", "antibiotic prophylaxis", and "dental infection".

## Background

Bacteremia is anticipated following invasive dental procedures.<sup>1,2</sup> Only a limited number of bacterial species commonly are implicated in resultant postoperative infections. An effective antibiotic regimen should be directed against the most likely infecting organism, with antibiotics administered shortly before the procedure. When procedures involve infected tissues, additional doses may be necessary.

Antibiotic usage may result in the development of resistant organisms. Utilization of antibiotic prophylaxis for patients at risk does not provide absolute immunity from infection. Postprocedural symptoms of acute infection (eg, fever, malaise, weakness, lethargy) may indicate antibiotic failure and need for further medical evaluation.

Appropriateness of antibiotic prophylaxis should be decided on an individual basis. Some medical conditions that may predispose patients to postprocedural infections are discussed below. This is not intended to be an exhaustive list; rather, the categorization should help practitioners identify children who may be at increased risk. If a patient reports a syndrome or medical condition with which the practitioner is not familiar, it is appropriate to contact the child's physician to determine susceptibility to bacteremia-induced infections.

## Recommendations

### Patients with cardiac conditions

Numerous cardiac conditions place patients at risk for endocarditis following dental manipulation. The AAPD endorses the American Heart Association's (AHA) guideline on prevention of bacterial endocarditis.<sup>3</sup> In addition to those diagnoses listed in the AHA guidelines, patients with a history of intravenous drug abuse<sup>4</sup> and certain syndromes (eg, Down syndrome, Marfan syndrome) may be at risk for developing bacterial endocarditis due to associated cardiac anomalies. Table 1 lists the suggested prophylaxis regimens.

Table 1. Suggested Antibiotic Prophylactic Regimens\*

Children not allergic to penicillin	Amoxicillin 50 mg/kg (max=2 g) orally 1 h prior to dental procedure
Children not allergic to penicillin and unable to take oral medications	Ampicillin 50 mg/kg (max=2 g) IV or IM within 30 min before dental procedure
Children allergic to penicillin	Clindamycin 20 mg/kg (max=600 mg) orally 1 h prior to dental procedure <i>or</i> azithromycin 15 mg/kg (max=500 mg) orally 1 h prior to procedure
Children allergic to penicillin and unable to take oral medications	Clindamycin 20 mg/kg (max=600 mg) IV <i>or</i> cefazolin 25 mg/kg (max=1 g) IV or IM within 30 min before dental procedure

\*No second dose is recommended for any of these regimens. Adapted from Prevention of Bacterial Endocarditis: Recommendations by the AHA.<sup>3</sup>

### Patients with compromised immunity

Patients with a compromised immune system may not be able to tolerate a transient bacteremia following invasive dental procedures. This category includes, but is not limited to, patients with the following conditions:

1. human immunodeficiency virus (HIV);
2. severe combined immunodeficiency (SCIDS);
3. neutropenia;
4. immunosuppression;
5. sickle cell anemia;
6. status post splenectomy;
7. chronic steroid usage;
8. lupus erythematosus;
9. diabetes;
10. status post organ transplantation.

Discussion of antibiotic prophylaxis for patients undergoing chemotherapy, irradiation, and hematopoietic cell transplantation appears in a separate AAPD guideline (pages 185-190).<sup>5</sup>

### Patients with shunts, indwelling vascular catheters, or medical devices

Bacteremia following an invasive dental procedure may lead to colonization of shunts or indwelling vascular catheters. Vascular catheters, such as those required by patients undergoing dialysis, chemotherapy, or frequent administration of blood products, are susceptible to bacterial infections. Ventriculoatrial (VA) or ventriculovenous (VV) shunts for hydrocephalus are at risk of bacteremia-induced infections due to their vascular access. In contrast, ventriculoperitoneal (VP) shunts do not involve any vascular structures and, consequently, do not require antibiotic prophylaxis.

The AAPD endorses the recommendations of the American Dental Association and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons for management of patients with prosthetic joints.<sup>6</sup> Antibiotic prophylaxis is not indicated for dental patients with pins, plates, and screws, nor is it indicated routinely for most dental patients with total joint replacements. Antibiotics may be considered when high-risk dental procedures (Table 2) are performed for dental patients within 2 years following implant surgery or for patients who have had previous joint infections. Consultation with the child's physician may be necessary for management of patients with other implanted devices (eg, Harrington rods, external fixation devices).

**Table 2. Dental Procedures Associated With Higher Incidence of Bacteremia**

Dental extractions
Periodontal procedures including surgery, subgingival placement of antibiotic fibers/strips, scaling and root planning, probing, recall maintenance
Dental implant placement and replantation of avulsed teeth
Endodontic instrumentation or surgery only beyond the apex
Initial placement of orthodontic bands, but not brackets
Intraligamentary and intraosseous local anesthetic injections
Prophylactic cleaning of teeth or implants where bleeding is anticipated

### References

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4. Dajani AS, Taubert KA. Infective endocarditis. In: Allken DA, Gutgesell HP, Clark EB, Driscoll DJ, eds. *Moss and Adams' Heart Disease in Infants, Children, and Adolescents*. New York, NY: Lippincott Williams & Wilkins; 2001:1297-1308.
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6. American Dental Association, American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. Antibiotic prophylaxis for dental patients with total joint replacements. *J Am Dent Assoc* 1997;128:1004-1007.

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