Antimicrobial Prescribing in Dentistry: Summary Guidance for Common Conditions in Adults

Dental practitioners should refer to: **www.antibioticprescribing.ie**: *Oral & Dental Infections* for full wording and further recommendations including the treatment of severe infection, second-line drug choices, dosages in children, other conditions and more.

Condition	**Summary of recommendations**	**Where indicated, 1st line choice of antimicrobial, dose and duration for adults**
Acute dento-alveolar infection (Dental abscess)	• If pus is present, drain by extraction of the tooth or through root canals. • If pus is present in the soft tissue, attempt incision. • Antibiotics are an adjunct to dental treatment ONLY where local measures are ineffective or there is evidence of spreading infection or systemic involvement*.	Phenoxymethylpenicillin 666mg (Calvepen®) or 500mg (Kopen®) every 6 hours for 5 days Or in penicillin allergy: Metronidazole 400mg every 8 hours for 5 days
Periodontal abscess	• If pus is present, drain by root surface debridement through the pocket or by extraction of the tooth. • If pus is present in the soft tissue, attempt incision. • Antibiotics are an adjunct to dental treatment ONLY where local measures are ineffective or there is evidence of spreading infection or systemic involvement*.	
Necrotising periodontal disease	• Scaling, irrigation and oral hygiene advice. • Recommend analgesia. • Consider the use of 0.2% chlorhexidine mouthwash. • Antibiotics only if there is evidence of spreading infection or systemic involvement*, in the immunocompromised or those with uncontrolled diabetes.	Metronidazole 400mg every 8 hours for 3 - 5 days
Pericoronitis	• Irrigate and debride the stagnation area. • Relieve occlusion by filing down the opposing tooth or extracting as appropriate. • Advise use of warm salt water and/or chlorhexidine rinses and/or targeted irrigation of site. • Antibiotics are rarely indicated unless there is spreading infection, systemic involvement* and/or trismus.	Metronidazole 400mg every 8 hours for 3 - 5 days Or Amoxicillin 500mg every 8 hours for 3 - 5 days
Acute pulpitis	• Provide definitive treatment of the cause.	Antibiotics not indicated.
Dry socket	• Irrigation with saline and packing of the socket. • Analgesia & advice on use of warm salty mouthwashes.	Antibiotics not indicated in the absence of spreading infection / systemic symptoms.

* Antibiotics have a role where there is acute dental pain with associated swelling and any of: systemic upset; cellulitis; tender lymphadenopathy; trismus or fever.

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