

# Infective Endocarditis

## **Antibiotics before your dental appointment – do you need them?**

In the past, your health care provider or dentist has recommended that you take antibiotics before most dental appointments. This was done as one step to prevent infective endocarditis. Infective endocarditis is an infection in the lining of the heart or heart valves.

Now, we recommend that only people at high risk for complications from infective endocarditis take antibiotics before some types of dental appointments. You still need to take antibiotics if your dental appointment involves working with your gum tissues or around the area at the base of a tooth and you have:

- An artificial heart valve
- Had endocarditis in the past
- Had a heart transplant and develop a heart valve abnormality
- Certain types of congenital heart disease

Your heart condition still puts you at increased risk for developing infective endocarditis. It is important to brush and floss your teeth daily and go to the dentist regularly.

If you develop symptoms of infective endocarditis, including an unexplained fever, call your health care provider's office.

People who are currently taking antibiotics before most dental appointments due to total joint replacements should continue to do so. Talk with your health care provider if you have any questions or concerns.