

How can you *Be Antibiotics Aware* at the dentist?

- Talk to your dentist about when antibiotics are and are not needed as part of your dental care.
- Take your antibiotics exactly as prescribed by your dentist.
- Follow up with your dentist if you experience any side effects or allergic reactions.



How can you keep your mouth healthy?

- Drink fluoridated water and brush your teeth twice a day with fluoride toothpaste.
- Floss daily between teeth to remove dental plaque.
- Visit your dentist at least once a year, even if you have no natural teeth or have dentures.
- Do not use any tobacco products. Smoking causes immediate damage to your body, which can lead to long-term health problems. The only way to protect yourself from harm is to never smoke, and if you do smoke or use tobacco products, quit.



Improving antibiotic use in dental care will keep you healthy now, help prevent side effects, and help fight antibiotic resistance.

To learn more about antibiotic prescribing and use, visit www.cdc.gov/antibiotic-use or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.



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Do You Need Antibiotics From Your Dentist?



**BE
ANTIBIOTICS
AWARE**

SMART USE, BEST CARE

What do antibiotics treat?

- Antibiotics treat certain oral infections caused by bacteria, like an abscessed tooth.
- In some cases, antibiotics are prescribed before dental procedures as a precaution to prevent infection. This is called **prophylaxis** and should be used only when necessary based on clinical guidelines. Talk to your dentist about whether you need an antibiotic before a dental procedure.



What don't antibiotics treat?

- Oral infections caused by viruses, like cold sores
- Fungal infections
- Toothaches or other pain from an injury/trauma, unless the injury has led to a bacterial infection. Ibuprofen or acetaminophen may be recommended to help ease dental pain.

Your dentist will determine if an antibiotic is needed as part of your dental care.

What are the possible side effects of taking antibiotics?



Get immediate help if you experience:

- Severe diarrhea, which could be a symptom of a *C. difficile* infection (also called *C. diff*), which can lead to severe colon damage and death.
- Severe and life-threatening allergic reactions, such as wheezing, hives, shortness of breath, and anaphylaxis (which also includes feeling that your throat is closing or choking, or your voice is changing).

Before having a dental procedure, talk to your dentist about any drug allergies or other medical conditions. Tell your dentist about medications you are taking to learn about possible drug interactions.

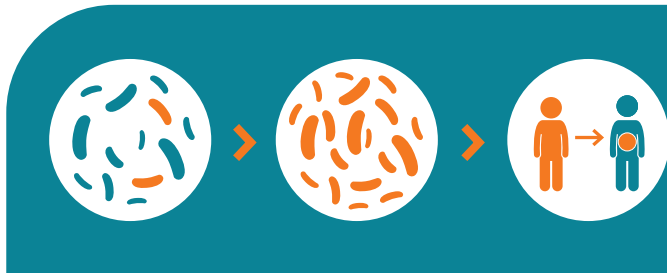
When antibiotics aren't needed, they won't help you, and the side effects could still cause harm.

In 2018, dentists prescribed 9.8% of outpatient antibiotics, which totaled 25.4 million prescriptions.

What is antibiotic resistance?

Antibiotic resistance is one of the most urgent threats to the public's health. Any time antibiotics are used, they can cause side effects and contribute to the development of antibiotic resistance. Always remember:

- Antibiotic resistance does not mean the body is becoming resistant to antibiotics; it means bacteria are developing the ability to defeat the antibiotics designed to kill them.
- When bacteria become resistant, antibiotics cannot fight them, and the bacteria multiply.
- Some resistant bacteria can be harder to treat and can spread to other people.



When you need antibiotics, the benefits outweigh the risks of side effects and antibiotic resistance.