



# DENTISTS: *BE ANTIBIOTICS AWARE*

## Treating Patients with Dental Pain and Swelling

**American Dental Association (ADA) treatment guidelines** state that antibiotics are not needed for most dental pain and intraoral swelling associated with pulpal and periapical infections in immunocompetent adults without additional comorbidities. These patients should undergo **definitive, conservative dental treatment (DCDT)** due to limited benefit and potential harm associated with antibiotic use.<sup>1</sup>

Pulpal/Periapical Condition	DCDT Immediately Available		DCDT Not Immediately Available	
	Prescribe Antibiotics	Perform DCDT	Prescribe Antibiotics	Refer to DCDT
Symptomatic irreversible pulpitis with or without symptomatic apical periodontitis	X	✓	X	✓ Interim monitoring
Pulp necrosis and symptomatic apical periodontitis	X	✓	X*	✓ Interim monitoring
Pulp necrosis and localized acute apical abscess without systemic involvement	X	✓	✓	✓ Urgent referral
Pulp necrosis and localized acute apical abscess with systemic involvement	✓	✓	✓	✓ Urgent referral

\*If DCDT is not feasible, provide a delayed antibiotic prescription to be filled after a predetermined period if symptoms worsen or do not improve

### Prophylactic Antibiotic Considerations

- X Generally not recommended for the prevention of prosthetic joint infections in patients with prosthetic joint implants.<sup>2</sup>
- X Recommended to prevent infective endocarditis (IE) only for patients with certain conditions (prosthetic cardiac valves, recurrent IE, congenital heart disease, & cardiac transplants).<sup>3</sup>

This document provides general guidance and does **not** apply to all clinical scenarios. Always assess the individual patient and use your clinical judgment. Refer to ADA guidelines for specific treatment recommendations, definitions, and resources<sup>1</sup>.

1. Lockhart PB, et al. JADA. 2019 Nov;150(11):906-21. 2. Sollecito TP, et al. JADA. 2015 Jan;146(1):11-16. 3. Wilson WR, et al. AHA. 2021 Oct;e963-e978.