

Management of Dental Infections

Immediate management of adult with dental infection

- Establish drainage – incise abscess
- Extirpate if endodontically involved
- Debride pockets if periodontally involved
- Prescribe antibiotics if indicated
- Recommend appropriate analgesia regime
- Consider extraction

Antibiotic indications:

- Limited mouth opening
- Facial swelling
- Systemic infection
- Immunocompromised patient
- Elevated temperature >38°C

Referral to A&E/Maxillofacial department indications:

- Difficulty breathing/likely to obstruct airway
- Involvement of orbital area/closure of eye
- Difficulty in swallowing/unable to stick tongue out
- Swelling rapidly increasing in size
- Evidence of infection of facial spaces e.g. Ludwig's angina

Disease	Antibiotic	Use	Dosage	Duration
• Periapical abscess	Amoxicillin	First line	500mg TDS	5 days
	Metronidazole	Allergic to first line	400mg TDS	5 days
	Clindamycin	Second line	150mg QDS	5 days
	Co-amoxiclav	Second line	375mg TDS	5 days
	Clarithromycin	Second line	250mg BD	7 days
• Periodontal abscess	Metronidazole	First line	400mg TDS	5 days
	Amoxicillin	Allergic to first line	500mg TDS	3 days
	Clindamycin	Second line	150mg QDS	5 days
	Co-amoxiclav	Second line	375mg TDS	5 days
	Clarithromycin	Second line	250mg BD	7 days
• Necrotising periodontal diseases • Pericoronitis	Metronidazole	First line	400mg TDS	3 days
	Amoxicillin	Allergic to first line	500mg TDS	3 days
• Sinusitis • Dry socket • Oro-antral communication • Sialadenitis	Metronidazole	First line	400mg TDS	7 days
	Doxycycline	Allergic to first line	100mg 2 capsules first day then 1 capsule/day	7 days

Table 2.1 – Antibiotic prescriptions. Please refer to box above for indications

Adapted from the Scottish Dental Clinical Effectiveness Programme (SDCEP Prescribing for Dentistry)

The British National Formulary (BNF) is also a useful resource to check dosages.

Dosages vary depending on age and weight, please check the appropriate guidelines.