

During new patient appointments, it is imperative to take a comprehensive medical history. This history represents the first essential step toward safe management of patient treatment. In addition, patients must be educated on how important medical conditions can impact their safety and prevent adverse unexpected events during their visit. The history should be documented in the patient's file and reviewed at every visit to update any changes. Updates should include:

- Check the patient's current medications and ask about any medication changes
- Ask about any new allergies to medications
- Check to see if there has been any recent Physician visits or hospitalizations, or under the care of a new physician
- Ask the patient if there has been any medical changes since the last visit
- Ask the patient if they are taking any OTC medications
- Document and confirm any changes in the chart

If the medical history is taken by another staff member, it must be reviewed by the dentist again prior to treatment. It is important for the dentist to review it orally and ask open-ended questions regarding the information that was provided. Both the patient and the dentist must sign the history after this review.

Prior to beginning treatment, the practitioner should also visually assess the patient. Record any vital signs to be used as a base guideline including blood pressure, pulse and respiration.

## **Prosthetic Joint Infection Guidelines**

In 2014, the American Dental Association in conjunction with the Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons developed a new guideline for prosthetic joint infection. The panel judged that the current best evidence failed to demonstrate an association between dental procedures and prosthetic joint infection. Prophylactic antibiotics are not recommended by the panel.

The practitioner and patient should consider the clinical circumstances that dictate higher risks and may warrant use of antibiotics. Well known risks of frequent antibiotic use include adverse reaction of antibiotics, GI reactions and resistance. Remember, these only guidelines are meant to help professionals make informed decisions. Consideration should be given to the specific patient situations which can influence choice. Final decisions are made with evidence-based peer reviewed information, in consultation with patient and possibly their physician. Documentation in the chart is mandatory and inclusion in the informed consent process is warranted.

Site Source: <http://www.ada.org/en/member-center/oral-health-topics/antibiotic-prophylaxis>

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