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**Antibiotics Won’t Cure a Toothache!**

Patients need to understand that the use of antibiotics is not an acceptable treatment for almost all oral health-related problems, such as a “toothache”, and should be used only in cases of severe infection when systemic involvement is evident.

**Summary of Therapeutic Antibiotic Use in Dentistry:1**

* Due to insufficient evidence supporting the use of antibiotics to treat periapical abscess, irreversible pulpitis, or symptomatic apical periodontitis, which are treated effectively through drainage by means of pulpectomy, incision, local debridement or extraction, antibiotics should not be prescribed.2-5 An exception to this would be if the patient seeks care with evidence of systemic involvement, as well as a gross, rapid, and diffuse spread of infection.2-3,6
* For the treatment of pericoronitis, dentists should prescribe antibiotics only when immediate surgical removal is impossible (for example, significant trismus) and there is an acute spreading infection; otherwise, symptoms associated with pericoronitis can be improved by means of local oral irrigation measures, chlorhexidine mouthrinse, and analgesics.7
* Antibiotics are not indicated for the treatment of dry socket because it is not an infection. Treatment of dry socket should include site irrigation with saline or chlorhexidine, a dressing material to control the pain, analgesics, and the maintenance of proper oral hygiene.8
* For the treatment of sinusitis, dentists should advise the patient to seek care from their primary care physician. Because of the self-limiting, likely viral nature of this condition, antibiotics are generally not indicated.9

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