

Antibiotic information

Your antibiotic prescription

It's important that you understand the prescription your dentist has given you. You've been prescribed antibiotics, which are drugs that fight the bacteria (germs) that can lead to infection.

Remember to take your prescription as directed to get the maximum benefit from it. You should also complete the full course of treatment, even if you feel fine. Stopping the course too early could make your symptoms return.

It might take up to 48 hours before you start feeling the benefit of your antibiotics. If you are in any pain, it's fine to take painkillers along with your antibiotics, following the directions on the packet.

Before taking your antibiotics

You must let your dentist know if

- You're allergic to any tablets or medicines, especially penicillin
- There is any possibility that you might be pregnant
- The full list of medications you are taking

When to take your antibiotics

Unless directed otherwise by your dentist, it's generally best to take antibiotics about half an hour before a meal. An important exception is the antibiotics Metronidazole (Flagyl), which you should take at the same time as food.

Take your antibiotics at roughly equal intervals during the day.

For example, if you need 3 tablets a day, you might take one at 8am, one at 4pm and one at 11pm.

Or if you need to take 4 tablets a day, you might take one at 8am, one at 1pm, and at 6pm and one at 11pm.

Possible side effects

Stop taking your antibiotics if you experience any of these symptoms, as you may have an allergy to your medication. Call 999 if your symptoms are serious.

- A rash
- Difficulty breathing
- Swelling or redness in the face
- Itchy hands or feet

Women should note that antibiotics can reduce the effectiveness of the contraceptive pill. Alternative contraceptive measures should be used while you're taking antibiotics and for 7 days afterwards.

Don't drink alcohol if you're taking the antibiotic Metronidazole (Flagyl) as the combination could lead you to experience severe nausea.

When to call your dentist

- If you start to feel worse
- If any swelling becomes significantly worse
- If you start running a high temperature
- If you develop diarrhoea with bleeding (slight nausea and diarrhoea is common and not a cause for concern). This is particularly important if you're taking the antibiotic Clindamycin.

Don't forget to attend any follow-up appointments with your dentist.