

Charleston Hip and Knee Replacement Center
125 Doughty Street, Suite 680
Charleston, SC 29403
843-789-1850
843-724-2633 fax

Dear Patient and Colleagues:

The development of infection following total joint replacement is a serious problem. Although rare, there are documented cases of such infection caused by bacterial introduced into the bloodstream during certain dental procedures. Various approaches can be taken towards preventing this, especially with regard to the use of antibiotics before undergoing a dental procedure. Recent review of the medical literature and advisory statements put forth by the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons and the American Dental Association has resulted in the following recommendations:

Prophylactic antibiotics should be given to:

1. All patients who have had a joint replacement within two years, regardless of the type of dental procedure or patient health status.
2. All patients who are immunocompromised, have insulin dependent diabetes mellitus, or have a systemic inflammatory disease such as rheumatoid arthritis or systemic lupus erythematosus, regardless of how long ago they have had surgery.
3. All patients, regardless of health status or how long ago they have had surgery, who are having invasive dental procedures. These include extractions, periodontal procedures, dental implant placement, root canals, or teeth cleaning likely to cause bleeding.

Prophylaxis should consist of a single 2-gram dose of Amoxicillin or Cephalexin given orally one hour prior to the dental procedure. In patients who are allergic to Penicillin, 600 mg of Clindamycin may be given instead. If a patient is unable to take oral medications, 1 gram of IM/IV Cephalexin or 2 grams of IV/IM Ampicillin is recommended. Finally, if a patient is allergic to Penicillin and unable to take oral medications, a single 600 mg dose of IM/IV Clindamycin should be taken one hour prior to the dental procedure.

If you are undergoing a dental procedure or even some other invasive procedure such as cystoscopy or sigmoidoscopy, you should inform your dentist or doctor that you have had a joint replacement.

If you have any questions concerning the use of antibiotics to prevent infection in your joint replacement, please contact our office at 843.789.1850.