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Antibiotic Prophylaxis for Patients with Joint Replacements

Your total joint replacement is at a low risk of becoming infected by bacteria traveling through your bloodstream. This risk can be lowered by promptly treating any infection in your body – including those in your gums, teeth, bladder, and kidneys.

Though the most critical period is the first two years after joint replacement surgery, infections can occur at any time. If you develop sudden pain in your joint replacement during the course of a bacterial infection elsewhere in your body, you should seek immediate medical attention. An infected total joint replacement is a very serious complication and needs to be dealt with immediately.

You should receive antibiotic prophylaxis before any and all dental procedures that involve bleeding, including routine cleaning. You also need antibiotic prophylaxis before any type of invasive procedure, including but not limited to: urological procedures, colonoscopy, or eye surgery.

Suggested antibiotic prophylaxis for dental procedures:

- *Patients not allergic to penicillin:* cephalexin, cephadrine, or amoxicillin: 2 grams orally 1 hour prior to dental procedure
- *Patients not allergic to penicillin and unable to take oral medicine:* cefazolin 1 gram or ampicillin 2 grams intramuscularly or intravenously 1 hour prior to procedure.
- *Patients allergic to penicillin:* clindamycin 600mg orally 1 hour prior to procedure
- *Patients allergic to penicillin and unable to take oral medications:* clindamycin 600mg intravenously 1 hour prior to procedure

Suggested antibiotic prophylaxis for urological procedures:

- A single systemic level dose of a quinolone (e.g. ciprofloxacin 500mg or levofloxacin 500mg) orally 1-2 hours before the procedure
- Ampicillin 2 grams intravenously (or vancomycin 1 gram intravenously if allergic to ampicillin) **PLUS** gentamicin 1.5 mg/kg intravenously 1 hour before procedure

You do not need antibiotic prophylaxis before receiving a manicure, pedicure, routine gynecological examination, or injection.

The physician caring for you will be able to provide the prescription for the proper antibiotic prophylaxis, but you should remind them that you have an artificial joint.

I recommend that you take prophylaxis for the **remainder of your lifetime** because an infection of your joint replacement is a very serious complication that is best avoided.