

Pre-Medication Guidelines for Patients with Heart Murmurs and Artificial Joints

The American Heart Association has published guidelines for antibiotic prophylaxis to prevent infective endocarditis (IE) in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*. These guidelines were based on a growing body of evidence that shows, for most people, the risks of taking prophylactic antibiotics outweighs the benefits. In fact, the evidence suggests that the preventive antibiotics may do more harm than good because of allergic reactions and bacterial resistance to antibiotics. Only patients at risk of infection of the heart's inner lining or the valves should receive IE prophylaxis.

Recommended Cases for IE Prophylaxis:

- Patients with artificial heart valves
- Patients who have a history of having IE
- Patients who have certain specific, serious congenital heart conditions, including:
 - Unrepaired or incompletely repaired cyanotic congenital heart disease, including those with palliative shunts and conduits
 - A completely repaired congenital heart defect with a prosthetic material or device, whether placed by surgery or catheter, during the first six months after the procedure
- Patients who have had a cardiac transplant and have valvular disease

To be safe the best thing to do is check with our office, your cardiologist or your family doctor if you have any questions about these guidelines.