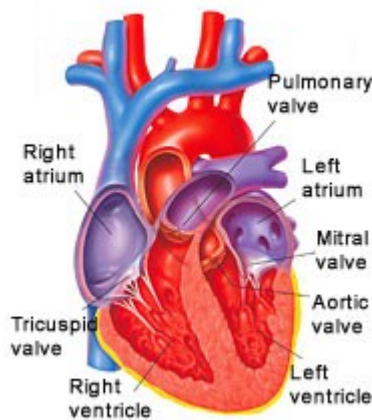


# Health Minute™

Do I still need an antibiotic before I visit the dentist?

The American Heart Association recently updated its guidelines regarding which patients should take a precautionary antibiotic to prevent infective endocarditis (IE) before a trip to the dentist. The guidelines, published in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*, are based on a growing body of scientific evidence that shows that, for most people, the risks of taking prophylaxis antibiotics for certain procedures outweigh the benefits. These guidelines represent a major change in philosophy. The new guidelines show taking preventive antibiotics is not necessary for most people and, in fact, might create more harm than good. Unnecessary use of antibiotics could cause allergic reactions and dangerous antibiotic resistance. Only the people at greatest risk of bad outcomes from infective endocarditis — an infection of the heart's inner lining or the heart valves — should receive short-term preventive antibiotics before common, routine dental and medical procedures.



People who need pre-dental antibiotics	People who don't need antibiotics
Artificial heart valve History of bacterial endocarditis Certain specific, serious congenital (present from birth) heart defects Transplanted heart that develops a problem in a heart valve	Mitral valve prolapse Rheumatic heart disease Bicuspid valve disease Calcified aortic stenosis Congenital heart conditions like ventricular septal defect and atrial septal defect Hypertrophic cardiomyopathy

For more information: American Heart Association's website at [www.americanheart.org](http://www.americanheart.org)