



SOUTHERN OREGON

ORTHOPEDICS

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Dental Procedures following Shoulder Surgery

For years it has been common after orthopaedic surgery, and joint replacement in particular, to delay elective dental procedures for a period of time following the orthopaedic surgery. It has also been a common practice for patients with a joint replacement to take antibiotics prior dental procedures. This has been done with the goal of preventing infection of the joint replacement.

In late 2012, the American Dental Association (ADA) and the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS) issued a practice guideline to “consider discontinuing the practice of routinely prescribing prophylactic antibiotics for patients with prosthetic joint implants undergoing dental procedures.” The recommendation was based on a lack of evidence that dental procedures contribute to joint infection or that the risk of joint infection is lowered with antibiotics. At the same time there are problems with giving antibiotics such as promoting drug resistance.

Infection after shoulder procedures is rare. For shoulder arthroscopy the risk is approximately 1 in 5000. For shoulder replacement the risk is 1%, although our personal infection rate is lower. The most common causes of shoulder infection are P. Acnes, which lives in the skin around the shoulder, Staph Aureus, and Staph Epidermis. Given the low risk of shoulder infection, the fact the causative organisms do not frequent the mouth, and given the joint statement above, **my policy at this time is to NOT routinely prescribe antibiotics prior to dental procedures or limit elective dental procedures for a period of time following shoulder surgery.** However, if a dental physician or a patient would like to prescribe an antibiotic prior to a dental procedure I do not object.

Please contact me or my office if you have further questions.