

Galway: GAPP - Galway Antimicrobial Prescribing Policy / Guidelines (GAPP): Bites, Animal and Human, Prophylaxis and Treatment

Bites, Animal and Human, Prophylaxis and Treatment

- This provides recommendations on choice of antibiotic prophylaxis of bite wounds. It is not a comprehensive guide to the care of bite wounds. Depending on the nature of the injury, the type of bite, the country in which the bite occurred and previous immunization history issues such as **prophylaxis against HIV** virus infection and immunization against **tetanus, hepatitis B** and **rabies** may all merit consideration in addition to the issue of antibiotic prophylaxis addressed here. Refer to HSE immunisation guideline chapters on tetanus and rabies for risk assessment and management (<https://www.rcpi.ie/Healthcare-Leadership/NIAC/Immunisation-Guidelines-for-Ireland>). Refer to Emergency management of Injuries (EMI) guidance for assessment of risk of bloodborne viruses (<https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/EMIToolkit/>)
- Application of **topical antiseptics is NOT of value** and should be avoided. Sterile water is appropriate for wound irrigation.
- Antibiotic prophylaxis is generally NOT appropriate for animal bites more than 2 days old OR human bites more than 3 days old** at time of presentation.
Antibiotic prophylaxis **IS** appropriate for:
 - All human bites** less than 3 days old, **all cat bites** less than 2 days old and **other animal bites** less than 2 days old to the hand, foot, genitals and face; puncture or crush wounds; wounds that require surgical debridement or involving joints, tendons, ligaments or fractures.
 - Wounds that have undergone primary closure.
 - People at risk of serious wound infection (e.g. those who are immunocompromised, diabetic, asplenic or cirrhotic).
 - People with a prosthetic valve or prosthetic joint.
- In the case of bites from **monkeys** seek to get as much information as possible about the species of monkey and discuss promptly with Microbiology or Infectious Diseases.
- If there are signs of infection, the issue is one of treatment rather than prophylaxis.** In the absence of previous appropriate prophylaxis the regimens below are generally appropriate for treatment of infected bites; however the dose, route of administration, duration and choice of agents may require adjustment based on severity of infection.

Empiric Antibiotics for Animal and Human Bites			
Infection	1 st line Antibiotics	In penicillin allergy	Comment
Animal & human bites, prophylaxis and treatment	Co-amoxiclav PO 625mg every 8 hours	Metronidazole PO 400mg every 8 hours + Doxycycline PO 100mg every 12 hours Avoid doxycycline in pregnancy or breastfeeding. Discuss with Micro/ID	Duration: Prophylaxis - 3 days Treatment - 7 days Consider need for IV therapy or longer duration if severe infection

Refs:

- HSE. [Bites \(Human/Dog/Cat\)](#) . Antibioticprescribing.ie April 2024
- NICE guideline. *Human and animal bites: antimicrobial prescribing*. November 2020.