

Prophylactic antibiotics in mammalian bites may prevent wound infection

Clinical question	Do prophylactic antibiotics in mammalian bites prevent wound infection?
Bottom line	Prophylactic antibiotics may reduce the rate of infection after bites by humans NNT =2 (based on 1 study) and after animal bites on the hand (NNT 3 to 7) based on 3 studies. Bites on head and trunk did not seem to benefit from antibiotics.
Caveat	Several studies included in the review were small, one involving only 12 patients. Different antibiotics were used in the studies, ranging from penicillin V to dicloxacillin.
Context	Bites by mammals are a common problem, accounting for up to 1% of all visits to hospital emergency rooms. Dog and cat bites are most common, and school-age children make up almost half of those bitten
Cochrane Systematic Review	Medeiros I, Saconato H. Antibiotic prophylaxis for mammalian bites. <i>Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews</i> 2001, Issue 2. Art. No.: CD001738. DOI: 10.1002/14651858.CD001738. Note: this review contains 8 studies with 522 participants.
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