

13 November 2017

Antibiotic Awareness Week - Be part of the Solution

See a dentist for dental problems

As Antibiotic Awareness Week (AAW) rolls round again, patients are being reminded that, first and foremost, Dental problems are best treated by a dentist, with emphasis on the correct diagnosis and treatment to ensure optimal health management. Simply relying on the use of antibiotics from your GP or other health provider is not the best solution.

Antibiotic Awareness Week is a worldwide event endorsed by the World Health Organization. It runs from 13-19 November 2017. This year's theme is: *Seek advice from a qualified health professional before taking antibiotics.*

"Antibiotic resistance is a very real problem across the world and everyone must take responsibility for their careful use" stated Dr Hugo Sachs, Federal President of the Australian Dental Association (ADA).

"Too often we see patients in the dental chair who have been treated inappropriately with antibiotics for a dental condition which should and could have been treated effectively by a dentist - sometimes without the need for antibiotics."

Taking antibiotics when they are not needed or worse, taking the wrong antibiotic reduces their effectiveness. This, in turn, limits the arsenal of antibiotics that healthcare professionals are able to use to tackle disease effectively.

Correct use of antibiotics is part the Australian Government's National Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy which focuses on measures to prevent antibiotic resistance and decrease inappropriate use of antibiotics across all sectors.

Dentists are responsible for around 3% of all antibiotics prescribed in Australia annually and the ADA is calling on its members to continue to use antibiotics judiciously and to keep abreast of the latest research on this vital issue. For instance, the ready prescription of antibiotics after a procedure is an area for careful consideration, since studies indicate this is rarely required. The ADA provides its members with free access to a pharmaceutical advice line where dentists can seek the latest guidelines on use of antibiotics amongst other drugs.

The ADA strongly recommends that patients see their dentist in the first instance if they have a dental problem.

"The first response to dental problems must always be, have it assessed by a dentist who can deal with the cause, not just the symptoms", added Dr Sachs.

Interviews available with Dr Hugo Sachs, President, Australian Dental Association

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