

## **PROTECTION AGAINST HEART VALVE INFECTIONS**

Abnormal heart valves or artificial heart valves can become infected if germs get into your blood. These infections can be life threatening and frequently require emergency heart surgery. Germs can get into your blood during various types of dental work or surgery. If you take the proper antibiotics beforehand, you can reduce the risk of getting a heart valve infection.

♥ Inform your dentist that you have a heart valve condition. You probably will need to take antibiotics by mouth before most dental work. Your dentist should be able to prescribe the proper antibiotic, if one is needed. If your dentist has any questions about the proper antibiotics, we can answer them.

♥ You may need to take antibiotics before an operation. The antibiotic may be given by mouth, but on occasion needs to be given through a vein. If you are going to have an operation, inform your surgeon that you have a heart valve condition.

♥ Never let a surgeon or dentist treat you without telling him or her about your heart valve condition.

♥ We can give you a card explaining your heart valve condition and listing the proper antibiotics.

We are pleased to answer your questions or discuss your condition with other health care professionals.