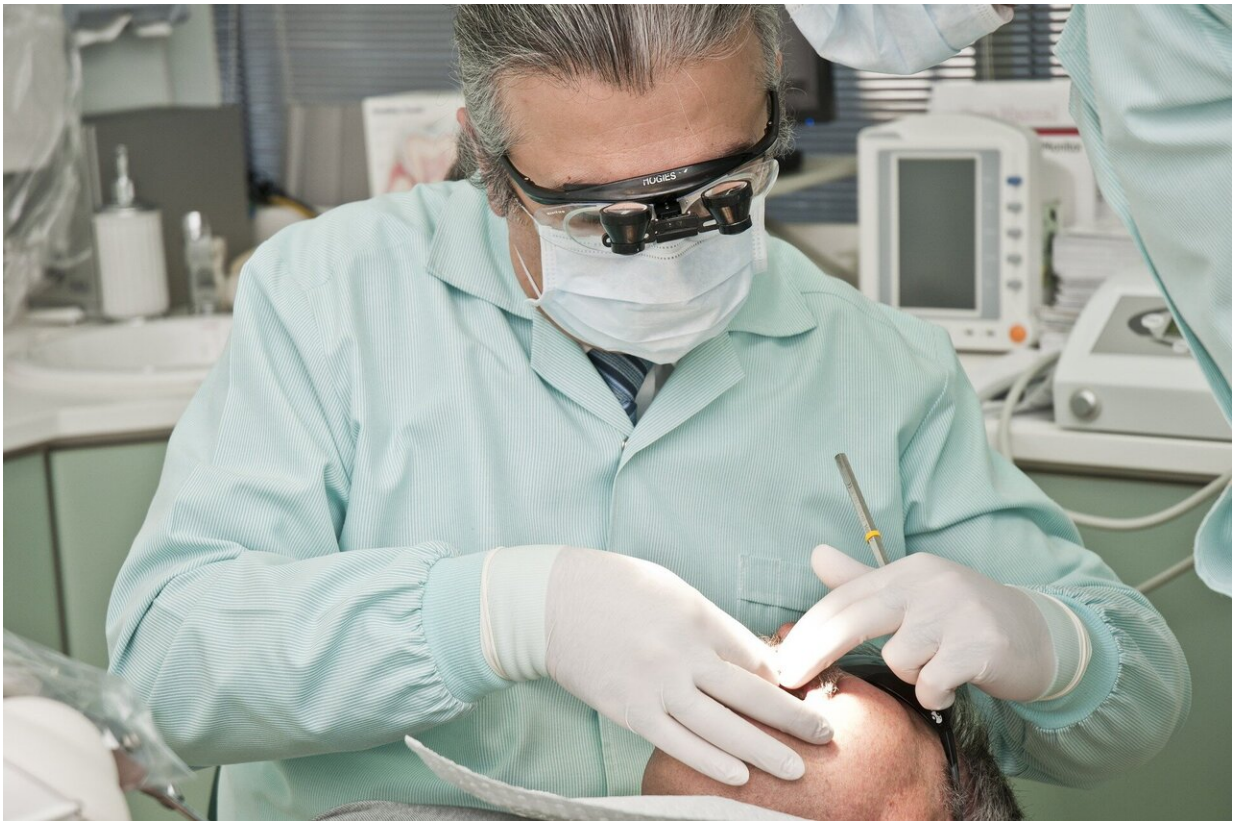


# Dental pain? Reach for the anti-inflammatories, not the antibiotics

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Dental pain can be very serious and sometimes people need urgent pain relief before they can get to a dentist.

In the latest edition of Australian Prescriber, specialist endodontist Dr. Aovana Timmerman and Professor Peter Parashos from the Melbourne Dental School give an overview of [dental pain](#) and the medicines that can help while awaiting dental treatment. They explain that antibiotics usually are not helpful.

"Not all [facial pain](#) is caused by a dental problem," says Dr. Timmerman.

"It may have another cause if, for example, the pain comes with a headache or is more a burning or 'pins and needles' pain. Your doctor and/or dentist can help to find the cause of the pain or refer you to a specialist."

Dr. Timmerman says "If you need relief from dental pain, ibuprofen is the first choice for most people, or a combination of ibuprofen with paracetamol for stronger pain relief.

"Be aware, however, that not everyone can take ibuprofen such as people with heart, kidney or liver conditions. Speak to your GP or pharmacist if you are unsure, and make sure to read the label and follow the instructions to avoid unwanted side effects.

"Antibiotics alone are usually not appropriate for dental pain. Having a fever, tenderness and a rapid spread of swelling may be signs of an abscess which will require drainage.

"Your doctor or [pharmacist](#) can give advice and help you with your pain if you have to wait to see a dentist," says Dr. Timmerman.

"The [best treatment](#) for dental pain is [dental treatment](#)," Dr. Timmerman advises.

**More information:** Aovana Timmerman et al. Management of dental

pain in primary care, *Australian Prescriber* (2020). [DOI: 10.18773/austprescr.2020.010](https://doi.org/10.18773/austprescr.2020.010)

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