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Dental Abscess & Facial Cellulitis

A dental abscess is an infection at the base of the tooth. It means a pocket of pus has formed at the tip of the tooth root in your jaw bone. The infection can appear as a swelling on the gum near the tooth, with or without pain. Without proper treatment, the infection can spread into tissue spaces of the head and neck, becoming cellulitis. Cellulitis is a common, potentially serious bacterial infection. The affected skin of the face appears swollen, red and typically is warm to the touch. Once the swelling begins, it can spread quickly and continue to be a problem until the infection is drained. This is done through surgery, a root canal or extraction.

- ✓ Be sure to continue to take the full dose of antibiotics even if improvement occurs. Do not skip any doses. If swelling worsens or you have any of the symptoms below your child may need IV antibiotics. Please contact the office if the cellulitis worsens.
- ✓ Put a cold pack on your jaw over the sore area to help reduce pain.
- ✓ You may use over-the-counter medication to ease pain, preferably Motrin & Tylenol.
- ✓ Keep your child home from school to monitor swelling.
- ✓ Do not have hot and cold food/drinks. Your tooth may be sensitive to changes in temperature. Do not chew on the side of the infected tooth.

Go to Emergency Room / Call 911 if:

- Swelling spreads to the upper half of your face or neck
- Stiff neck or severe headache
- Your eyelid begins to swell shut, vision problems
- Unusual drowsiness/high fever above 100.5 F
- Evidence of anaphylaxis from antibiotics and/or hives
- Weakness or fainting
- Difficulty swallowing or breathing



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