

Removing Teeth

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This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

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Why do I need to have a tooth removed?

You may need a tooth removed for one or more of the following reasons.

- Tooth decay
- Periodontal (gum) disease
- Trauma
- Dental abscess
- Failed root-canal treatment
- Severe pain
- Over-eruption
- Orthodontic treatment
- Treatment planning
- Medical reasons

Are there any alternatives to removing a tooth?

Simple painkillers such as paracetamol can help control mild pain and antibiotics can help with infection.

Sometimes root-canal treatment will help to treat infection and pain.

Depending on how damaged your tooth is, your dentist may be able to rebuild it with a filling or crown.

What will happen if I decide not to have the operation or the operation is delayed?

Your symptoms may get worse or return. There is a risk of getting a serious, life-threatening infection.

If you need to have your tooth removed before you can have other dental or orthodontic treatment, the treatment may not be possible or the chance of the treatment being a success may be reduced.

If you have increased pain, contact your dentist.

What does the operation involve?

Most teeth are removed under a local anaesthetic that is injected around your tooth to numb it. The operation can take up to 40 minutes.

Your surgeon will loosen and remove your tooth with instruments called elevators and forceps. Most teeth can be loosened and removed in less than a minute. However, sometimes removing a tooth can involve cutting the gum to uncover your tooth, removing bone around your tooth and dividing your tooth with a drill.

How can I prepare myself for the operation?

If you smoke, stopping smoking now may reduce your risk of developing complications and will improve your long-term health. Stopping smoking and keeping your mouth clean significantly reduces the risk of infection in a tooth socket.

Try to maintain a healthy weight. You have a higher risk of developing complications if you are overweight.

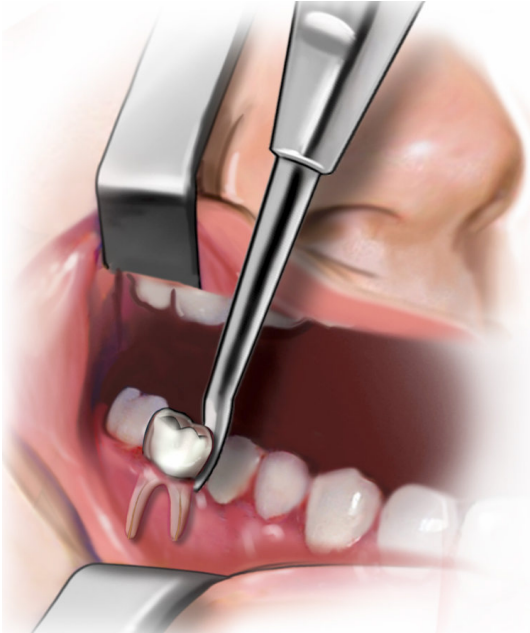
Regular exercise should help to prepare you for the operation, help you to recover and improve your long-term health. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

If you have not had the coronavirus (Covid-19) vaccine, you may be at an increased risk of serious illness related to Covid-19 while you recover. Speak to your doctor or healthcare team if you would like to have the vaccine.

What complications can happen?

General complications of any operation

- Bleeding
- Swelling and bruising
- Infection
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Chest infection



An elevator is used to loosen the tooth



Forceps are used to remove the tooth

Specific complications of this operation

- Dry socket, where the socket does not heal well
- Retained roots
- Damage to nearby teeth
- Damage to nerves
- Broken jaw
- Not being able to open your mouth fully (trismus) and jaw stiffness

- Sinus problems
- Osteonecrosis, a rare condition where tissue in your jawbone starts to die preventing your tooth socket from healing properly

Consequences of this procedure

- Pain

How soon will I recover?

You should be able to go home the same day.

Try to leave your wound alone for 1 to 2 days. Then rinse your mouth gently with hot, salty water after meals for the next 2 days.

To reduce the risk of bleeding, swelling and bruising, do not exercise, drink alcohol or have a hot bath for 24 hours.

You may need to take up to a week off work. You should be able to return to normal activities within a week.

Regular exercise should help you to return to normal activities as soon as possible. Before you start exercising, ask the healthcare team or your GP for advice.

Most people make a full recovery.

Summary

Teeth can sometimes cause serious problems.

Removing a tooth is usually a safe and effective way to prevent your symptoms from coming back.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

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Acknowledgements

Reviewer

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Illustrator

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