

# Removing Deciduous Teeth (child and adolescent)

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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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## What is a deciduous tooth?

Deciduous teeth (also called milk teeth or baby teeth) are the first set of teeth that a baby grows.

Your child may need a milk tooth removed for one or more of the following reasons.

- Tooth decay
- Trauma
- Dental abscess
- Damage to the underlying permanent tooth
- Severe pain
- Orthodontic treatment
- Submerging tooth
- 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 child's tooth is, your dentist may be able to rebuild it with a filling or crown.

## What does the procedure involve?

Most teeth are removed under a local anaesthetic that is injected around your child's tooth to numb it.

If your dentist or surgeon thinks the procedure may be complicated, they may use an alternative to a local anaesthetic.

- General anaesthetic
- Sedation

The procedure can take up to 20 minutes. Your dentist or surgeon will loosen and remove your child's tooth with instruments called elevators and forceps.

Most teeth can be loosened and removed in less than a minute. However, in rare cases removing a tooth can involve cutting the gum to uncover

the tooth, removing bone around the tooth and splitting the tooth with a drill.

Your dentist or surgeon may need to close the gum with stitches.

## What complications can happen?

- Bleeding
- Swelling and bruising
- Infection
- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication
- Damage to nearby teeth
- Damage to the lip

## Consequences of this procedure

- Pain is related to how difficult it was for your dentist to remove your child's tooth

## How soon will my child recover?

Depending on the difficulty of the procedure and the risk of infection, your child may be given antibiotics.

Your child must leave their wound alone for 1 to 2 days. Then for the next 2 days they must rinse their mouth gently with boiled, warm, salty water after meals.

Your child may need to have the following day off school, especially if they had a general anaesthetic. They should be able to return to normal activities within a week.

## Summary

Teeth can sometimes cause serious problems. Removing a tooth is usually a safe and effective way to prevent your child's 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.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

## **Acknowledgements**

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