

Tooth Extraction Information

Why do dentists take teeth out?

It's important that you understand the treatment that your dentist has recommended for you. There are several reasons that teeth sometimes need to be removed. If a tooth becomes infected or loose, starts to decay, or if you have gum disease, pain, swelling or a persistent unpleasant taste in our mouth, your dentist may recommend extraction. Wisdom teeth are sometimes removed because there's not enough room for them and this can lead to pain and infection.

What to expect

Most potential side effects of tooth extraction are nothing to worry about and are easily dealt with, but talk to your dentist if you have any concerns. You might experience discomfort and swelling for the first few after the extraction, particularly if the tooth has been difficult to remove. You might also notice some bruising. Remember, having a tooth taken out is a minor surgical procedure so there is a small risk of complications. It's hard to tell who might be at risk of complications before the extraction.

Here are some of the specific risks of extraction associated with different kind of teeth

All teeth

In certain circumstances the root of the tooth can break off during the extraction procedure. If these pieces are small your dentist might decide to leave them in place and will discuss the risk and benefits of doing this with you. Pieces of root left in place often work their way to the surface after a few years and it's usually a simple process to remove them.

Upper back teeth and upper wisdom teeth

The roots of these teeth are very often close to the sinus (air space) in the jaw and after extraction there might be an opening left between the sinus and the mouth. If this is the case, your dentist will give you some important information about how to blow your nose, cough and sneeze while you're healing.

In the unlikely event that a piece of bone breaks loose while an upper molar is being removed, your dentist will probably just remove it along with the tooth. If the piece of bone is large, it may need specialist care. It's not possible for your dentist to predict in advance if this might happen.

Lower wisdom teeth

Because these teeth are close to the nerve in the lower jaw, there is some risk of nerve injury, your dentist will discuss this with you. Nerve injury can cause numbness or tingling in the tongue, lip or chin and can sometimes affect taste. Your dentist can't always predict this risk, although an x-ray can help.

Dry Socket

Following an extraction if there is limited bleeding you can experience a dry socket. You are more at risk with certain medication and a high risk if you are a smoker. Advice will be given by your dentist how to minimise this risk. If you develop a dry socket, which will occur, 1-3 days following an extraction it can be managed by your dentist.

When to call your dentist

After your extraction, if there is persistent bleeding, if you start to run a high temperature, if swelling around the extraction starts to get worse or you have pain that's not reduced by painkillers, it's possible that you might have an infection, so contact your dentist.