

MINOR ORAL SURGERY INFORMATION SHEET

1. Removal of Decayed Teeth or Buried Roots

This may involve cutting the gum and drilling away some of the tooth and surrounding bone.

What are the benefits?

You will be less likely to have problems with cyst formation, infection, and pain.

Are there any risks or complications?

- Occasional bruising or stretching of nearby nerves may cause temporary numbness. It is rare that this does not get better.
- Small risk of infection in tooth socket.
- Damage to adjacent teeth, crown or filling. This happens rarely.

Are there any alternatives?

If the teeth are left in place, then problems you are having would continue and will probably worsen. Occasionally serious infections may occur.

2. Removal of Wisdom Teeth

This is a common operation, which is done under a local anaesthetic. This will usually involve a small surgical procedure. A cut is made in the gum followed by removal of bone and sectioning of the tooth if required. The gum is then stitched back together using dissolvable stitches.

What are the benefits?

The problems you are having should improve.

Are there any risks or complications?

The removal of wisdom teeth is a common procedure but as with all surgical procedures, it has its risks.

- Two nerves run close to the lower wisdom teeth and provide the feeling/sensation to lower lip, chin, and tongue on each side. Occasionally during surgery, the nerves can be bruised or damaged and you may experience some numbness or altered sensation to your lip, chin, gum or tongue. If this occurs, it is usually temporary and clears up over a period of several weeks or months. On a few rare occasions, this may be permanent (less than 1 in 1000). If this looks likely, to limit such an occurrence a small piece of the tooth may be left in situ over the nerve.
- Small risk of infection in tooth socket.
- Damage to adjacent teeth, cap or filling. This happens rarely.
- Occasionally removal of upper back teeth (premolars & molars) may produce an opening between the mouth and cheek sinus or the tooth may be displaced into the sinus. In these instances, the tooth can usually be removed, and the defect repaired at the time of surgery.
- Uncommon complications i.e. increased risk of jaw fracture or permanent numbness.

Are there any alternatives?

If the teeth are causing symptoms, then there are not usually any other long-term solutions apart from removal.

3. Apicectomy

This is the treatment for infection at the tip of the root of a non-vital tooth that has failed to respond to root canal therapy.

The gum is cut, and the infection is cleaned from the bone, and the tip of the root is removed. The remaining root is then sealed with a small filling, usually amalgam. This

treatment will leave a small scar on the gum.

What are the benefits?

The infection and pain you are experiencing should clear up.

Are there any risks or complications?

- The gum around the tooth can shrink back. If the tooth is capped (crowned), the margins may become visible and the crown may need replacing.
- This treatment has a high success rate, especially with the front teeth, and the tooth will usually last for several more years.

Although there is a chance:

- Infection may recur and the procedure may need repeating. Sometimes this is not possible and then the tooth requires extraction.
- Temporary numbness of the gum. It is quite rare that the gum will not recover from this.
- Damage to adjacent teeth, root of teeth, cap or filling. This happens rarely.

Minor Oral Surgery Recovery

- You may experience some swelling, discomfort and bruising which can take 1-2 weeks to settle. This is minor with simple tooth extractions but can be more marked with removal of difficult teeth or Apicectomy. Swelling may increase over the first few days and then gradually settle over the next week.
- Depending on the procedure, you may require a few days or a week off work.
- You may experience some initial discomfort and difficulty in opening your mouth. You will need to take soft food until this improves.
- The gum is usually repaired with dissolvable stitches, with the stitches lasting 3 to 21 days.
- Post-operatively you will be given verbal and written information on aftercare and what to expect following minor oral surgery.
- You may be given antibiotics, if necessary. Women on the contraceptive pill should be aware that antibiotics can interfere with how the pill works so another contraceptive method should be used.
- Use your regular painkillers, or those prescribed. Avoid aspirin unless part of your regular medication. Start brushing the surgical site gently the next day to keep it clean.
- Have nothing to eat or drink until the local anaesthetic has worn off in case you burn or bite your lip and/or tongue.
- Do not rinse your mouth for the rest of the day as this may cause the area to bleed.
- In case of bleeding, roll up one of the swabs provided and place over the site, applying constant pressure for 10-15 minutes. If you run out of the swabs provided, a handkerchief or flannel will be sufficient. Do not use tissue or cotton wool.
- The day after surgery, use a mouthwash four times a day, for 5-7 days. In a tumbler of warm water place a teaspoon of salt. Gently bathe the surgical area with the salty water for thirty seconds. Alternatively use a Chlorhexidine mouthwash (this may temporarily stain the teeth if used for more than 2 weeks).