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# APICECTOMIES

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Information for patients



## **Apicectomies**

This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of your forthcoming treatment and contains answers to many of the commonly asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer, or would like further explanation, please do not hesitate to ask.

### **What is an apicectomy**

An apicectomy is a surgical procedure to remove the tip of the root of a tooth buried within your jawbone.

### **Why do I need treatment?**

When a tooth is badly decayed, has a large filling, or receives a blow in an accident, the soft tissues within it (the pulp) may die. The dead tissue must be removed to prevent infection and this is usually undertaken by your dentist by a procedure called root canal treatment.

Sometimes this root canal treatment is unsuccessful, and infection persists at the tip of the root. This may sometimes cause pain, but more often the infection will spread and cause a small spot or gumboil next to the tooth. An apicectomy is an operation designed to remove this infected part of the root tip. Usually a small filling is also placed in the end of the root to seal it.

### **How much of the tooth root will be removed?**

Only the very tip of the root is removed: usually 3-4mm.

### **What does the treatment involve?**

A cut in the gum above the tooth followed by removal of bone to find the root tip. Removal of the root tip and then placing a seal. Once the surgery has been removed the gum is put back into place with stitches. In the majority of cases these stitches are dissolvable and take around two weeks to disappear.

## **What type of anaesthetic is used?**

A number of options are available and depend on how difficult the wisdom tooth is to remove.

- Local anaesthetic – this is an injection into the gums surrounding the tooth, rather similar to that you may have had at your dentist for a filling. The injection takes a couple of minutes to numb the area and means that you feel no pain while the tooth is treated. This is the best option for wisdom teeth that are simple to remove.
- Local anaesthetic and intravenous sedation – in addition to a local anaesthetic injection you can be given an injection in your arm. This makes you feel relaxed and less aware of the procedure.

If you are having day surgery with sedation or under a general anaesthetic, you need to ensure that a responsible adult is with you for the first 24 hours after surgery and that they can escort you home as well. You will need to make our own transport arrangements for your discharge unless arranged by the hospital in advance. If arrangements are not in place your surgery will be cancelled.

## **Will the apicectomy make the tooth loose?**

Teeth often feel slightly loose for 3-4 weeks after an apicectomy until new bone grows around the tooth root. Then they usually become firm and more comfortable than before the operation because the infection has been removed.

## **Is there much pain or swelling after an apicectomy?**

It is likely that there will be some discomfort and swelling both on the inside and outside of your mouth after surgery. This is usually worse for the first 3 days, but it may take up to 2 weeks before all the soreness goes. You may also find that your jaw is stiff and you may need to eat a soft diet for a week or so. It is likely to be sore after your surgery and your surgeon will advise you about pain relief medication. It may also be necessary for you to have a course of antibiotics after the apicectomy. There may be some bruising of the skin on your face which can take up to a fortnight to fade away.

### **Is there anything else I need to do after the apicectomy?**

It is important to keep the surgical site as clean as possible for the first few weeks after surgery. It may be difficult to clean your teeth around sites of the extraction because it is sore. If this is the case it is best to keep the area free from debris by gentle rinsing with a mouthwash or warm salt water (dissolve a flat teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water), starting on the day after surgery.

### **Do I need to take any time off work?**

Usually it will be necessary to take a few days off work and avoid strenuous exercise for this time. Depending on the type of anaesthetic used. You may well be able not to drive (24 hours after intravenous sedation or after a general anaesthetic)

Immediately following a general anaesthetic, you may feel tired dizzy or weak. You must have somebody to collect you and stay with you for the first 24 hours. During the first 24 hours you must not drive or operate any motorised vehicles or electrical equipment, sign any legal documents, make any important decisions or drink any alcohol.

### **What are the complications associated with this procedure?**

This is usually a very safe procedure, which is carried out by specially trained staff who are very experienced.

Complications with this type of surgery are, fortunately, rare and may not apply to you, but it is important that you are aware of them.

- Bleeding – although there may be a little bleeding at the time of extraction, this usually stops very quickly and is unlikely to be a problem if the wound is stitched. Should the area bleed again when you get home this can usually be stopped by applying pressure over the area for at least 10 minutes with a rolled-up handkerchief or swab. If the bleeding does not stop, please contact us for further help and advice or if out of hours then call 111.

- Gum recession – The gum around the crown of your tooth can recede following your surgery
- Infection – it is important to keep your mouth clean and to reduce or cut down your smoking following the apicectomy to prevent infection. Antibiotics are not routinely prescribed after surgery, but your surgeon may prescribe antibiotics for particular cases.
- Failure of the operation – An apicectomy is not always successful but is often the last attempt to save your tooth. Your surgeon will explain your individual chance of success


### **Review post apicectomy?**


It is important that you attend this appointment which is usually 7-10 days after your operation. Stitches may need to be removed and a check made that healing is satisfactory. Usually an x-ray will also be taken. The surgeon will usually wish to see you again 4-6 months later for a further x-ray to check that the bone has healed satisfactorily.

### **Who can I contact with questions or concerns?**

You can contact the clinic on;

 BMI Thornbury : 01142661133

 High Trees : 01143493326

 Occidental : 0114 2780110

or email us on [maxfac.njl@icloud.com](mailto:maxfac.njl@icloud.com)