

# Minor oral surgery

## Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery

Information for Patients

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### What is minor oral surgery?

This includes small surgical procedures on the mouth, lips, teeth and face. Procedures are usually done under local anesthetic (dental injection) whilst you are awake. Some of **these procedures include:**

#### Biopsy

A small piece of tissue is removed under local anaesthetic, and is sent off to be examined under a microscope to get a diagnosis. It can take between 2 to 6 weeks to get the results.

The biopsy may remove all the tissue that is a cause for concern (excisional biopsy), or part of it (incisional biopsy). There will be a small scar in the area.

#### Possible complications

- Some bruising or stretching of nearby nerves may cause temporary numbness. For a small number of people this may be permanent.
- The biopsy area will heal with a scar. This may be thickened (lumpy).
- There is also a possibility that the problem may come back (recurrence).
- Your surgeon will talk to you about any further complications related to your particular biopsy.

### Taking out difficult or broken down teeth

This **may** involve the gums being cut and pushed out the way, to allow us to see the tooth better. There may be some drilling of the surrounding bone, to make room for the tooth/root to be removed.

**Health information and support is available at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)  
or call 111 for non-emergency medical advice**

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## Possible complications

- Some bruising or stretching of nearby nerves may cause temporary numbness. For a small number of people this can be permanent.
- There is a small risk of infection to the tooth socket.
- Nearby teeth could be damaged which your dentist would need to repair.

## Apicectomy

This treats an infection at the end of the root of a dead tooth that has failed to respond to root canal treatment. The procedure is usually carried out under local anesthetic.

The gum is cut and pushed aside, and bone over the end of the root tip may be removed to expose the infected area. The infection is cleaned out, and the tip of the root removed. The root is then sealed with a small white filling. The area is closed with dissolving stitches (sutures), and there will be a small scar on the gum.

## Possible complications

- The gum around the tooth can shrink back, exposing the root. If the tooth is crowned (capped), the margins may be seen and the crown may then need replacing by your dentist.
- The success rate is quite good in front teeth (70 to 90 in every 100 patients treated). The rate is lower with other teeth, especially if you have had this treatment before.
- The tooth may become wobbly (mobile) due to some of its root being removed. This will usually firm up.
- Infection at the root tip may come back, and the procedure may need repeating. Or if this is not possible, you may need to have the tooth taken out (extracted).
- There may be temporary numbness of the gum in the area. For a small number of people this can be permanent.
- Nearby teeth could be damaged which your dentist would need to repair.

## Recovery

- You may have some bruising and swelling, which takes 1 to 2 weeks to settle. This is minor after a biopsy, but may be more severe after a difficult extraction or apicectomy. The swelling usually gets worse at first, for a few days, then will settle over the next week.
- You will have some oozing of blood from the wound for up to 24 hours after the procedure.
- Depending on the procedure, you may need a few days to a week off work.
- You may have some discomfort, or difficulty opening the mouth at the start. You may then need to be on a soft or liquidized diet until this improves.

- The gums are repaired with dissolving stitches (sutures), which may take up to 2 weeks to dissolve. You may need to brush these with your toothbrush to remove them if they last more than 2 weeks.

## What do I need to do after the procedure?

- You may be given antibiotics, and you should use regular over the counter painkillers, or those prescribed. Avoid aspirin, unless it is part of your regular medication.
- Keep your mouth as clean as possible. Brush gently around the wound from the next day using warm salty water or chlorhexidine mouthwash such as Corsodyl® (only use this for 1 week, as it stains the teeth), to bathe the wound.
- Do not rinse the mouth, spit, drink alcohol or eat/drink anything hot for the rest of the day, as this may cause bleeding.
- If you have bleeding, roll up a clean handkerchief, or the gauze we give you, and moisten it with cool boiled water (do not use tissue or cotton). Place it over the site and apply pressure for 15 minutes.
- Do not smoke whilst the wound is healing as this may cause infection and slow healing.

## Contact the department if you have:

- Numbness lasting more than 3 weeks.
- Very severe pain or pain that does not go away, a lot of swelling or bleeding.
- Any other concerns.

## Contact details

Direct Number: 0116 258 5301

Nurses Station: 0116 258 5671

Appointments: 0116 204 7858

Previous reference: 03.06.2005.23683.jw

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