



Dental procedures under general anaesthetic for adults

This factsheet is designed to give you information about your dental procedure. A member of the day surgery unit pre-assessment team will contact you nearer the time of your operation to talk to you about your health and give you instructions in what you should eat and drink before your operation. Please refer to the leaflet "A01 General Anaesthetic" for important information to enable you to receive a safe general anaesthetic.

Are there any alternatives to having my dental procedure under general anaesthetic?

At your assessment appointment the dentist will have discussed any other possible methods of having your dental procedure for example, using local anaesthetic or sedation.

General anaesthetic will only be considered for your dental procedure if you and the dentist agree that a general anaesthetic is the best option for you. If you want to talk about this further then please ask the dentist.

What dental procedures may be carried out under general anaesthetic?

- Dental examination
- Dental x-rays
- Tooth extractions
- Fillings
- Scale and polish
- Fluoride varnish application
- Application of anti-bacterial gel (Chlorhexidine Gluconate)
- Fitting of dentures.

What are the benefits of having your dental procedure?

Dental procedures restore good oral health by treating any infection, dental decay and gum disease. This helps to improve the function of your mouth, your appearance and confidence as well as your general health and well being.

What are the risks?

Dental x-rays

All dental x-rays are extremely low dose exposures and any risks associated with them are similarly, extremely low. Dental x-ray images are only ever taken when they are clinically justified and to the benefit of the patient. Should you wish to discuss this further, please ask the dentist.

Tooth extractions

- Some pain, swelling and bruising may occur. This is usually managed with over the counter pain relief medicine.
- The main risk is bleeding. This usually settles on its own. Rarely, you may need another procedure to stop this.

- Other complications can be post operative infection where infection and swelling may occur or a dry socket/early loss of blood clot which can be very painful with a bad smell and taste in your mouth.
- Trismus which means not being able to open your mouth fully and jaw stiffness. This is more common with lower teeth. Let your dentist know if this does not get better within a few weeks

Uncommon risks

- Retained roots where it is not possible to remove the whole tooth or the dentist decides it is safer to leave a root fragment in place. The dentist will inform you of this after the procedure and discuss any future treatment if it is necessary.
- Damage to nerves leading to loss of sensation or tingling sensation in your teeth, jaw, lips, tongue and chin. Any damage is usually temporary and can take up to 18 months to recover. Most common in the removal of lower teeth.
- Sinus problems, sometimes removing an upper tooth can cause an opening between a sinus and your mouth. This can cause infection (sinusitis), pain and draining of fluid between your mouth and your nose. The opening usually closes but you may need surgery.
- Sometimes a tooth may move into a sinus. If this happened you would need surgery to remove the piece of tooth.
- Medicine associated osteonecrosis of your jaw where your tooth socket does not heal properly. Please tell the dentist if you take or have ever taken any bisphosphonate medicine or other medicine which affects bone. The dentist will discuss this with you in more detail before your procedure is carried out.
- Broken jaw although this is rare.

Fillings

Your tooth may become sensitive or feel different when you bite on it. Very occasionally your tooth may become painful.

Scale and polish

Teeth and gums may feel tender and sensitive to hot and cold drinks.

Fluoride varnish application

Very rarely people can have an allergic reaction to fluoride varnish. Please inform the dentist if you have been admitted to hospital in the past year because of asthma or any other allergy especially to sticking plasters.

Anti-bacterial gel

Please inform your dentist if you have an allergy to Chlorhexidine Gluconate.

Fitting of dentures

Any dentures which are fitted immediately after tooth extraction are made by estimating the shape and size of what we expect your gums to look like once your teeth have been removed. This means that these dentures may not fit perfectly or stay in place very well.

These dentures are called "immediate" dentures and are designed to be temporary until your gums heal and a better fitting denture can be made in a few months time. Very occasionally we may not be able to fit your denture on the day of your operation.

Some discomfort, swelling and bruising can be expected after having teeth removed and dentures fitted. However, as the extraction sites heal, the swelling will reduce and the dentures will become more comfortable and gradually fit better.

Your dentures may need to be adjusted to relieve pressure points, contact your dentist if you feel your dentures need adjusted.

How long will the operation take?

This will depend on which procedure is being carried out. When the procedure has finished you will be taken to first stage recovery until you are awake and then they will go to second stage recovery where your escort can join you until you are considered fit to go home.

What will happen when I go to second stage recovery?

A nurse will check on you at regular intervals until you are fully awake. Once you are ready you will be offered a drink and snack.

What can I expect when I wake up?

- Numbness in your mouth as the dentist may have given you a local anaesthetic. Be careful not to accidentally chew or bite your cheeks, tongue or lip. Avoid very hot food and drinks.
- You may have stitches in your gums which should dissolve in a few weeks.
- You may have a packing in your sockets which will either dissolve in a few days or fall out. If it falls out it will be dark brownish in colour.
- You may have been fitted with a denture.
- You may feel some discomfort following your dental procedure. It is important that you tell the nurse if you have any discomfort so that they can give you some pain relieving medicine.

When can I go home?

Once the day surgery staff have checked that you are comfortable and are fit to go home you will be discharged from the hospital. Very rarely the dentist or anaesthetist may advise that you need an overnight stay in hospital.

Self care advice for patients

After dental extractions

Some discomfort, swelling and bruising can be expected after having a tooth removed. Follow these guidelines to reduce complications and aid healing.

Pain control

- You may need to take some pain relieving medicine for a few days. Paracetamol or Ibuprofen can be taken at the dosages recommended on the pack if your health allows you to normally take these medicines. Avoid aspirin as it may increase bleeding.
- Don't smoke and avoid alcohol for at least 24 hours to reduce the risk of further bleeding and infection. Do not do any strenuous exercise.

- Rinsing the mouth. Do not rinse on the day of extraction, but start rinsing the following day with lukewarm salt water (one teaspoon of table salt to half a glass of warm water). Hold salty water in your mouth over the socket for 30 seconds, spit out and repeat as required. Do this for several days afterwards, particularly after meals and last thing at night. This will help with the healing process.

Bleeding

After a tooth is removed a blood clot will form in the socket. Do not disturb the blood clot as there is nothing better you can put in its place. When you leave the hospital, the bleeding will have stopped.

You should not take part in any activity for the rest of the day. If the blood clot is disturbed, it may start bleeding again. If this happens, don't be alarmed, take a clean handkerchief, roll it up like a sausage, place it over the socket and ensure that you bite down firmly on it for 20 minutes by the clock. Repeat if necessary. Do not lie down. If bleeding continues seek dental advice.

Post-operative infection

If you experience a lot of pain or swelling then seek dental advice.

Dry socket

A dry socket happens when a blood clot does not form in the socket after a tooth has been extracted. This is a very painful condition which will require further treatment from the dentist. If this occurs please seek dental advice.

Other risks

If you have any other problems following tooth extraction for example, difficulty opening your mouth, numbness, sinus or jaw pain that concerns you please seek dental advice.

After fillings

Avoid biting on fillings until the day after your dental procedure. You should brush your teeth as normal.

Teeth may become sensitive or feel different to bite on. If this does not settle down in a few weeks then contact your dentist. However, if your tooth becomes very painful and pain relieving medicine does not help then seek dental advice.

After dentures have been fitted

If you have been fitted with an "immediate" denture following tooth extraction you should keep the denture in place until the next morning. The following morning you should remove the denture, rinse your mouth with warm salty mouthwash as instructed under "Rinsing the Mouth" and carefully brush any of your own remaining teeth. Rinse the denture in cold water and replace immediately.

Try to wear the denture as much as possible as this will help with healing and get you used to wearing your denture. Apart from the first night you should leave your denture out each night and refer to the "Denture Cleaning" leaflet for advice on how to clean and look after your denture. If you have any problems with the fit of the denture you should contact the dentist who made the denture for you.

If discomfort increases or lasts more than a few days please seek dental advice.

General advice

Is there anything special I have to do to look after mouth at home?

Yes, we suggest you have soft food initially and drink plenty of fluids. Avoid hot food and drinks until the end of the day.

You should brush your teeth as normal except if you have had teeth removed in which case you should brush your teeth as normal taking care to avoid touching any sockets.

Will I have any pain at home?

When you go home it is advisable to take regular pain relieving medicine for the first 24 to 48 hours even if you do not complain of discomfort.

After this you can take as necessary Paracetamol and/or Ibuprofen at the dosages recommended on the pack if your health allows you to normally take these medicines. If you have had a tooth removed avoid aspirin as it may increase bleeding

Are there any complications which I must look out for once I have been discharged home?

If you have any difficulties breathing or swallowing, develop a high temperature, have facial swelling or have severe pain which is not relieved by pain relieving medicine then you must seek immediate dental advice.

Further information

If you have any queries about your procedure please contact your local dental clinic during opening hours.

During out-of-hours (evening, weekends and Public Holidays) please contact NHS24 on 111

We are listening - how did we do?

We welcome your feedback, as it helps us evaluate the services we provide. If you would like to tell us about your experience:

- speak to a member of staff
- visit our website: www.wihb.scot.nhs.uk/feedback or share your story at: www.careopinion.org.uk or 0800 122 31 35
- tel. 01851 704704 ext. 2236 Monday-Friday between 10am-4pm (answerphone available).

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