

Aftercare instruction after wisdom tooth removal

Outpatients Patient information

The aim of this leaflet is to answer common questions about post-operative care advice after having wisdom teeth removed. If you would like further information, or have any concerns, please see the contact numbers on the back of this leaflet

Pain and swelling

When the numbing medicine (local anaesthetic) wears off, your mouth may feel sore. It normally takes from 90 minutes to four hours to wear off. It is best to take painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen before the numbness wears off. Only take these if it is ok for you to do so. Otherwise consult your dentist or pharmacist for advice. Your dentist may also prescribe you some antibiotics to take. You need to be careful not to bite your tongue, lip, or the inside of your mouth while you are numb.

You might also notice:

- swelling
- bruising
- jaw ache
- difficulty opening your mouth

These are normal side effects and usually get better within a week.

Bleeding

Your dentist will check for bleeding before you go home. A little bit of bleeding or oozing is normal for the first 24 hours.

If it starts bleeding again:

1. roll up a clean damp cloth or gauze into a sausage shape (use cooled boiled water)
2. place it over the bleeding area
3. bite down firmly for about 20 minutes continuously

If bleeding continues, try again.

If it does not stop or you have any concerns, please call one of the numbers on the back of this leaflet.

Stitches

Sometimes you may have stitches. These are dissolvable and can take up to two weeks to disappear.

Dry socket

Sometimes the blood clot does not form or comes out of the socket too soon. This affects the healing. It also leaves exposed bone in the socket and causes throbbing pain. The dentist can treat this with a dressing that is placed directly into the socket.

Avoiding rinsing for the first 24 hours. Not vaping or smoking for 72 hours can help to prevent this.

Going back to work

You can return to work when you feel ready. This depends on:

- how you feel
- the type of work you do
- how complicated the extraction was

Try not to do any heavy lifting or exercise for a couple of days. It is advised to rest.

Looking after your mouth

- For the first 24-48 hours have a softer diet
- Make sure food and drinks are not too hot, especially while you are still numb
- Do not rinse or gargle for the first 24 hours
- After 24 hours rinse gently with warm salt water (½ teaspoon of salt in 250ml of water) 3-4 times a day, especially after. Do this for about 7-10 days.
- Brush your teeth like normal but be careful around the area where the tooth was removed.
- No smoking or vaping for at least 72 hours. Smoking can cause pain, slow healing, and increase the risk of infection. Find your nearest NHS Stop Smoking Service from the NHS Smokefree website or call the Smokefree National Helpline on **0300 123 1044**. You can also ask for advice about nicotine patches, gum, and other nicotine replacement from your local pharmacy.

If you're unsure about anything or feel something is not right, please contact us.

Contact details

Post-operative enquiries

Outpatients Oral Maxillo-Facial

Tel: **0300 019 2145** (Monday - Friday 8.30am-5pm)

Day of Surgery Unit

Tel: **0300 019 2170** (7.30am-8pm)

Head and Neck Ward C4

Tel: **0300 019 2415**

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To ask for this leaflet in larger print, please contact the patient experience team on **0300 019 8499**
or email uhd.patientexperienceteam@nhs.net.

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