

Important information about tooth extraction



You have been referred to Somerset Surgical Services (SSS) because you may need to have one or more teeth or roots removed (extracted). This booklet aims to provide some important information about what to expect from now until you are discharged from our care.

What happens next?

This booklet should have been sent to you along with a letter inviting you for your initial outpatient consultation with an SSS clinician. Please note that your tooth/roots will not be extracted during this appointment. Your clinician will talk to you about the tooth/teeth which need extracting and you will be formally placed onto the waiting list for this to happen. You will also sign your consent form at this appointment, which will confirm that you know what the procedure involves and any risks associated with it. Please read this book carefully and come to your consultation prepared with any questions you wish to ask.

There are a number of possible risks associated with dental extraction, and these will be specified on your consent form along with any additional risks that your clinician feels may specifically apply to you. It is a legal requirement and good practice for you to be fully informed and made aware of these risks before you sign the consent form.

Serious or frequently occurring risks

Pain

Dental extractions are painful, which is why you will receive a number of injections of anaesthetic into your gum beforehand to numb the whole area. This injection can be painful and uncomfortable, but works quickly and your clinician will ensure that the area is numb before extracting the tooth/roots. If you feel pain during the extraction please inform the clinician or attending nurse as another injection can be administered. Please be aware that it may be necessary for the nurse to support your head during the extraction.

The anaesthetic will wear off in a number of hours and you will need to take regular painkillers for several days until the pain lessens. The pain can be quite intense for the first two weeks, but should lessen and resolve within six to eight weeks.

Swelling

Some swelling and bruising is normal and is usually at its worst on the second or third day following extraction. This should disappear within two weeks. You may have a stiff jaw and difficulty opening your mouth wide during this time, again this should settle within two weeks. Use a cold compress to ease the swelling and sleep propped up on extra pillows if you can.

Bleeding

Some slight bleeding is normal for a day or two following extraction. This can be controlled by applying pressure over the area. Roll up a handkerchief dipped in warm water, place it over the socket and leave for

one hour undisturbed. If the bleeding is excessive or does not stop following repeated application of pressure please phone the SSS office or your dentist during office hours or the NHS 111 service out of hours.

Time off work

You may need to take a day or two off of work while you recover. Your clinician can advise you about this, please be sure to ask them about it.

Nerve damage

Some teeth/roots are very close to nerves in the lower jaw. Extraction of these teeth/roots can cause numbness, pain or tingling in the tongue, lip and chin areas. If this happens it is usually temporary, but occasionally it can be permanent. You may have an x-ray of your mouth which can help to tell your clinician whether your teeth are close to the nerves.

Oro-antral fistula

The roots of upper molar teeth may be close to the sinuses in your nose. Very rarely, after dental extraction a fistula may appear, which is a hole between the extraction site and your sinus cavity. This may require further treatment.

Other complications

Dry socket (alveolar osteitis)

Dry socket is a known complication following dental extraction and can develop 3 to 5 days after surgery (www.nhs.uk). Dry socket occurs when a blood clot fails to develop or disappears completely. The empty socket can cause an intense throbbing pain in your jaw, sometimes with an unpleasant taste or smell. If you look into the socket you will sometimes see exposed bone.

You are at higher risk of developing dry socket if;

- You smoke
- You have had the condition before
- You are over 25 years old
- The extraction was difficult
- You don't follow the advice you are given following the extraction (you will be discharged with an advice leaflet)

Infection

Signs of infection include;

- High temperature
- Discharge of pus from the extraction site.
- Persistent pain and swelling

If you develop any of these complications following your extraction you should contact the SSS Clinical Nurse Lead during office hours on 01934 881379 who will advise you

and may be able to arrange an appointment with your clinician during their next clinic. You can also contact your own dentist or if assistance is required out of hours please contact the NHS 111 service.



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