

## Extractions

There are many reasons why a tooth may need to come out. For example, if your tooth is badly broken down due to decay, trauma or wear then it may not be possible to save it. Sometimes, if “the nerve” has become irreparably damaged and cannot be treated with a root filling, or if a root filled tooth is repeatedly infected, then it may be best to remove it. Additionally, a tooth may be removed to relieve overcrowding and to create space.

### What is involved?

Firstly, we freeze up the surrounding area to make sure it is all completely numb. This means that you can relax, confident in the knowledge that the entire procedure is nice and comfortable. Then the tooth is gently loosened before being carefully lifted out. Then you will be asked to bite onto a soft pad to apply a little pressure to the area to help it heal quickly.

### What if I can feel it?

You should not be able to feel a thing, other than a little gentle pressure. However, you are in charge, and if you want the procedure to stop at any time for any reason then all you need to do is to raise your hand. Everything stops because you are in control.

### What else do I need to be aware of?

Afterwards, the socket is vulnerable to infection until full healing takes place. You will need to keep the area clean with antiseptic rinses, and occasionally antibiotics are required. The fragile blood clot where the tooth came out will take about 24 hours to firm up, and you will need to take it easy for a day or so. Avoid smoking

### What about afterwards?

It is occasionally possible to experience some post-operative swelling or discomfort, so it is a good idea to take some anti-inflammatory painkillers such as ibuprofen to help ease you through any disruption. Always read the medicine information leaflet beforehand to ensure that it is safe for you to take ibuprofen.

### What about the gap?

You may not want to be left with a gap as there are potentially unwanted consequences: The neighbouring teeth may drift or tilt into the space and the tooth that was biting against it may grow into the gap as it now has nothing to oppose it. Also, chewing efficiency may reduce and create more work for the remaining teeth to do, potentially resulting in damage to the teeth or jaw joint.

### There are four ways to fill the gap:

Your situation may be best suited to one or more of the following:

1. Replacing the missing tooth with a denture.
2. Replacing the missing tooth with a bridge.
3. Replacing the missing tooth with an implant.
4. Moving the neighbouring teeth into the space with braces.