

PATIENT INFORMATION

Apicectomy

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Why is an apicectomy necessary?

This is the next line of treatment after root canal treatment has failed. This means the root canal treatment has been carried out on the tooth in the past but there is persistent infection at the base of the tooth root. The procedure involves removing the end of the root, where infection is contained. A small filling is then put in the root end of the tooth; this is called a retrograde root filling.

How is it done?

- This procedure will be performed under either a local anaesthetic or a Day Case general anaesthetic.
- In both cases local anaesthetic will be administered to the area, so this area will feel numb and swollen after the procedure.
- An incision (cut) will be made in the gum overlying the troublesome tooth. A small amount of bone will be removed with a drill, exposing the root tip of the tooth.
- The area of infection will be cleaned and the end of the root removed. A small filling is then placed in the end of the root to seal the root filling. The gum will be repositioned over the tooth and secured with dissolvable stitches.

What happens afterwards?

- After the operation your mouth is likely to feel sore and tender for a few days and you will be advised to take painkillers e.g. Paracetamol.
- It is important to keep cleaning your teeth as usual but obviously take care around the operation site. You will be advised to rinse your mouth with hot saltwater, mouthwashes and/or Corsodyl mouthwash.
- You will be given an appointment to attend the department 2 to 3 weeks after the procedure, to ensure that everything has healed well.

Could there be any problems after the operation?

As with any type of surgery, certain problems could possibly occur following the operation:

- Infection – the area around the exposed teeth may become red, swollen and increasingly tender after the operation. This would usually be an indication of infection, and you should either contact the Oral & Maxillofacial Department or your Dentist for advice. It may be necessary for you to take a course of antibiotics.
- Occasionally the tooth may be slightly loose after the surgery. If this was to happen, you would be advised not to bite hard foods with the tooth for several weeks after the surgery.
- If the treated tooth continues to have an infection after treatment, it may be necessary to repeat the operation or to extract the tooth
- There may also be numbness around the tooth and gum shrinkage, this usually gets better but may persist.

If you have any questions about this information leaflet, please contact the Oral & maxillofacial Surgery Department on 01803 655150.

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.

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