

THE ORAL SURGERY POD – PATIENT INFORMATION

Examples of oral surgery procedures may include removal broken or decayed teeth, removal of retained roots of teeth, removal of impacted wisdom teeth, removal of soft lumps and bumps or surgical root canal treatments through the apices of teeth. There are other similar surgical procedures in the mouth that we sometimes perform too.

The following information is generic and may not necessarily be relevant to the procedure that is planned for you.

We fully expect that your visit will go very smoothly.

Your arrival

Please note that your allocated time is an **ARRIVAL TIME**, and not necessarily the time that you will be treated as there are a number of arrangements that are required before your treatment can commence. In contrast to dentistry, oral surgery treatment times are unpredictable, as different procedures vary greatly in the time taken to perform. Given the nature of oral surgery and the need to see emergency patients in addition to booked patients, your visit including the waiting time may take up to **2 hours** but is normally much quicker. Please therefore be prepared to wait for some time before you are invited into the clinical area.

As an analogy, your care today is organised in the same way as an A&E Department, where you wait in the waiting room until it is your turn to be seen. Oral surgery is not the same as dentistry where you are seen at a specified appointment time.

If you have made use of the free 1-hour street parking available outside the London Dakatra clinic, please do let a member of our team know.

Have a light meal before you arrive, unless instructed otherwise. As long as your medical history allows it, and if you've used the medication before with no concerns, please take 400mg of Ibuprofen approximately one hour before your arrival time. If you are unable to take Ibuprofen, that does not matter, and the surgeon will discuss alternatives with you when you arrive.

You should inform us of any allergies you have and any medical conditions you have ever been diagnosed with, even if you believe that they are not relevant to your oral surgery treatment.

Take all your regular medications as normal, unless instructed otherwise.

Bring a list of any medications that you take, and if you have had any blood tests within the few days prior to your visit, please bring the results with you.

If you have previously had any x-rays taken at another provider, it may be helpful if you could ask for a copy and bring it with you.

You should advise us on any special needs or arrangements you feel you may require.

Patients having treatment under local anaesthetic alone may drive to and from their visit.

Estimate

The admin staff will fully inform you of the costs of the care you will be receiving, if any, and any insurance arrangements if appropriate. Please ensure that you are happy with this and have had all your questions answered before you agree to go ahead with the treatment.

On entry to the clinical area

We will see you and make a full assessment and discuss everything with you. You must take this opportunity to ask all questions that you may have. You must ensure that you understand everything before agreeing for the surgical procedure to be performed. Once you have given us permission to treat you, we may sign a consent form together.

The procedure

Once started, most oral surgery procedures can be completed within 45 minutes.

You will initially be made numb with a number of small scratches in the gum as necessary. The surgeon will first ensure that you are completely numb before embarking on the procedure. It is normal to feel a substantial amount of pressure and pushing, however it is not sharp and does not hurt. If it does, then you must inform the surgeon so that the numbness can be maintained.

Sometimes, opening the gum may be necessary to access the site of surgery. This feels no different. A machine that vibrates and sprays water may then be used. Once the procedure is completed, the gum will be placed back in position with stitches. Unless informed otherwise, you can assume that dissolvable stitches have been used, so there would be no need for you to return to have them removed.

Dental Implants

If replacing an extracted tooth with a dental implant is something that interests you, please inform the surgeon prior to the procedure, as it will necessitate a slightly different surgical technique.

After the procedure

The surgeon will not discharge you until satisfied that there are no concerns such as bleeding. You will be provided instructions on how to take care of your mouth during the healing phase.

It is common to expect a small degree of discomfort after the procedure, which is normally readily controlled with simple painkillers such as Ibuprofen and Paracetamol. Swelling, bruising and stiffness of the jaw are not uncommon.

Potential risks and complications

Complications are rare and therefore should not be expected, but it is important to recognise that they are possible. As is the case with any intervention, the risks and benefits must be carefully considered prior to proceeding with surgery. Unless specifically advised to the contrary, you should expect your procedure to be completed uneventfully with minimal complications.

Procedures involving lower teeth may rarely cause trauma to a nerve that runs through the lower jaw and supplies the lip, chin, gums and tongue with feeling. This may result in an altered sensation of any of these areas, which could be anything ranging from numbness, tingling, pins and needles, burning, or even pain. In most cases, the feeling returns to normal eventually, but very rarely, the effect may be permanent. The surgeon will discuss this in more detail with you, including the relative chances of it affecting you in particular. In the greatest majority of people, it is reasonable to expect that nothing untoward will happen at all.

Procedures involving upper back teeth may affect your sinuses, which lie just above the teeth. Sometimes, a small opening occurs between the mouth and the sinus, which tends to heal spontaneously depending on its size. If it doesn't, it can be managed with another small surgical procedure involving stretching the gum across the opening. Teeth fragments could potentially slip through the opening into the sinus. If this very rare event occurs, then it may necessitate an onward referral to our ENT colleagues for retrieval.

Operating on a tooth requires leaning on the adjacent tooth. If this is heavily restored or has a crown, or is decayed and fragile, then there is a susceptibility for the tooth to fracture or the restoration to be dislodged, requiring you to return to your dentist for further management.

Working on your back teeth involves stretching your lips so it is not uncommon for them to be a little traumatised and sore or chapped after the procedure. A little Vaseline will help whilst it is healing.

As is the case with any surgical procedure, anywhere in the body, infections are possible. If this occurs, we will make sure it is treated. Smokers and patients on particular medications may have delayed healing and susceptibility to infections. The surgeon will discuss the relevance of this with you.

The tooth socket in the jawbone corresponds exactly to the shape of the tooth. Over the few weeks after the tooth is removed, the bone will remould to change its shape. Rarely, this remodelling results in small edges of bony spicules to appear in the socket that are often confused by patients to be tooth fragments. They are not and usually fall off, but if they become a particular irritant, the surgeon could flick them off for you.

Queries and who to direct them to

If you have any queries, feel free to contact Dakatra, preferably via dakatra@dentallymail.co.uk or alternatively on 03301225182. Please visit our website and Facebook page to access detailed information and to explore the wider range of services we offer. If you would like to be kept informed of Dakatra's services, please let us know and we will happily add your details to our mailing list.

To enhance convenience and access to healthcare for patients, in addition to our own premises in London, Dakatra also hires dental chair space from a number of existing dental practices from where our care is provided. If you have been seen at a premises other than Dakatra, please be aware that you are not a patient of the host clinic and will remain a patient of Dakatra. If you have any queries while you are waiting, please feel free to ask to speak to Dakatra's duty nurse or surgeon. Please do not direct your queries to the reception staff of the host practice, as apart from knowing your name to welcome you, they know nothing else about you and do not hold a file for you.

We hope you find this reading material useful while you are waiting to be seen. Please also feel free to have a browse of our website and Facebook page.

INSTRUCTIONS FOLLOWING ORAL SURGERY

Local Anaesthetic

The local anaesthetic will make you feel numb for at least a couple of hours. Beware not to eat or drink something hot as you will not be able to judge temperature and may scald yourself.

Don't be tempted to chew or touch the numb area

Eating

You may eat and drink as normal but you may choose to eat food that is easier to chew. A liquid diet is unnecessary but eating crunchy foods may be uncomfortable and disrupt the surgical site. You must avoid hot food and drink for the first day.

Surgical site

The surgical site immediately forms a blood clot, which is the first phase of healing. It is important you do not dislodge this blood clot so that the healing is not disturbed. Therefore, do not rinse your mouth out or touch the area for the rest of the day in order to leave the blood clot in place. Brush your teeth as normal but avoid the surgical area and you may choose to dribble the water rather than spit it out.

Keeping the area clean

From the day after surgery, the blood clot should be more secure so you should keep the area clean by rinsing gently with either lukewarm salty water or any mouthwash of your choice. The advised time to do this is after you eat any food in order to wash the debris from the area. We may advise you to use a specific mouthwash but this is not normally necessary.

Stitches

You may have had stitches in your gum. They dissolve. This may take up to 3 weeks.

Bleeding

A little bleeding is not uncommon and is of no concern. Sleep with a towel over your pillow on the day of surgery in case you dribble a little blood. Your saliva may be stained pink from the blood clot. Don't be concerned by confusing this with actual bleeding. Profuse bleeding that gushes or fills your mouth is very unlikely and should be managed by tightly placing a tissue or the gauze provided and biting extremely hard on it for at least 20 minutes. Firm pressure almost always stops bleeding. If it doesn't, then you should contact us.

Physical activity

This should be kept to a minimum as it exacerbates bleeding.

Smoking

Smoking delays healing and if this occurs, it is more likely that you get an infection called a "dry socket". Infection and poor healing can be very painful so try your best not to smoke until the healing is complete in an attempt to prevent this.

Pain relief

Surgery on any area of the body may cause some discomfort afterwards in much the same way as you would expect after any other operation. It is therefore advisable to take painkillers before the numbness wears off. The jawbone would heal in a similar way to your leg or arm or any other part of your body after an operation. Don't be surprised or concerned by this.

The discomfort should be managed by taking regular painkillers such as Paracetamol or Ibuprofen, if your medical history allows it. If you are taking any medication, please confirm with us that routine painkillers are appropriate for you to take.

Ibuprofen reduces swelling as well as treating discomfort. Although these medications can be taken together, it is advisable to take them at different times in order for the effect to occur more frequently.

Teeth replacement

Teeth that are removed may not necessarily need replacing. You may find that you quickly adapt with the way you chew and look. If however you are interested in replacing lost teeth, your dentist may discuss the options with you, which may include dentures, bridges, or implants.

Dental implants are titanium-based rods that are placed in your jawbone, upon which a tooth looking crown is attached, in order to have a fixed option to replace your lost tooth. Oral surgeons are experts in this field of dentistry, so if dental implants interest you, please let us know, and we would be happy to liaise with your dentist and assess if this form of treatment is appropriate for you.

Feedback and Testimonials

We welcome feedback and suggestions at any time during your care. Patients often wish to be filmed for a brief video recording to inform other patients of their experience. If you would like to volunteer for a quick interview, it would be greatly appreciated, so please do let us know at any time. Obviously, you are under no obligation whatsoever to do so. We do not use patients' names when filming.

Questions

Please feel free to ask any questions at any stage.