

## **Tooth Extraction**

### **What is tooth extraction?**

Tooth extraction is the removal of a tooth (or teeth) from the mouth, either due to damage or decay, or to make room for new teeth (e.g. wisdom teeth).

### **Who can benefit from having a tooth extraction?**

Individual's who have decayed or damaged teeth – perhaps due to gum disease or broken teeth – may have to undergo tooth extraction. Teeth may also need to be removed to make room for new teeth (e.g. wisdom teeth), prepare the mouth for braces or if they are causing severe pain. There are other medical conditions that can lead to the need for tooth extraction, but your doctor or dentist will talk you through this if they deem it necessary.

### **Procedure**

A local anesthetic is usually used to numb the area before tooth extraction. Sometimes a general anesthetic may be preferred if the patient is particularly nervous. Forceps are used to loosen the tooth by pulling it from side to side, before the tooth is extracted from the mouth. If the tooth is not prominent or has not come through the gum, the tooth extraction may have to be done surgically. This involves making an incision into the gum and lifting the gum flaps to reveal the tooth, which is then removed. The incision is then closed using stitches.

### **Recovery Period**

You will need to arrange for someone to drive you home if necessary, as the anesthetic may take up to 24 hours to wear off completely. You may be aware of some pain and swelling, which you can take painkillers for. If stitches have been used, you will need to return after a few days to have these removed. Your dentist will advise you on what to eat and drink, as well as oral hygiene, as your teeth may feel quite sensitive following the tooth extraction procedure. It is normal to experience a small amount of bleeding for the first couple of days.

### **Risks**

Complications ensuing tooth extraction are rare, but can happen. These include bleeding, infection, damage to surrounding nerves and blood vessels, jaw fracture, numbness, a hole in the sinus (which should close in time) and pain.