

Extraction Information

Dentists do their best to preserve their patients' natural smiles but, under certain circumstances, your dentist may need to remove one or more of your teeth through a procedure called extraction. Read on to learn more.

Why are teeth extracted?

Teeth are usually extracted because decay and damage has left the tooth unable to be repaired through other methods. Patients suffering from periodontal disease also may undergo extraction to remove loose teeth.

Teeth also may need to be removed for orthodontic reasons. With the goal of properly aligning a patient's teeth, your dental provider may recommend extraction to provide your teeth with the room needed to achieve the desired result. Lastly, for teeth that are impacted—those unable to break through the gumline—your dental provider may recommend extraction.

What happens during the extraction procedure?

The first step your dentist will take in the extraction process is to numb the area(s) surrounding the extraction site. The procedure will not begin until the local or general anesthesia used has taken effect.

When extracting an impacted tooth, your dentist will need to remove gum tissue and bone to expose the tooth. Then, using forceps, he or she will loosen the tooth using a gentle back and forth rocking motion. While a tooth is usually removed in one piece, hard-to-remove teeth may be extracted in pieces.

Upon completion of the extraction, a gauze pad will be placed in the socket to help stop the bleeding. Your dental provider also may choose to stitch the extraction site to help promote the closing of the gum edges.

Are there any risks involved with tooth extraction?

Tooth extractions are a common form of oral surgery but, like most surgeries, this procedure leaves the body susceptible to infection. Before scheduling your extraction, it is important to be honest with your dentist. Provide him or her with your entire medical history—including a list of all of your medications and supplements. Your medical history will guide your dentist in developing the pre- and post-treatment plan that best fits your needs.

What should I do after the procedure?

It is important to follow the post-extraction recovery procedures outlined by your dentist. He or she may prescribe an antibiotic to prevent the extraction area from becoming infected. To reduce the pain and swelling, your dental provider also may recommend pain medication and the application of ice to the affected area in 10-minute increments.

Keep the extraction site clean. It is recommended that you avoid smoking and you should not drink from a straw within the first 24 hours following an extraction. Continue brushing and flossing your teeth, but take care to avoid the extraction site as not to irritate it. Your



dentist may recommend that you rinse your mouth with a homemade salt water solution. If advised, swish gently to avoid dislodging the blood clot that has formed at the extraction site.

If you experience any symptoms, such as severe pain, infection, nausea or vomiting, redness or swelling at the extraction site, or shortness of breath, contact your dentist immediately. These symptoms could indicate infection.

What about tooth replacement after extraction?

Depending upon your situation, your dentist may recommend replacing extracted teeth with implants, dentures, or a bridge. Talk to your general dentist to learn more about the options available to you.



KnowYourTeeth.com

Brought to you by the Academy of General Dentistry (AGD), this website answers important dental health questions, offers the latest information on current treatments, provides tips for first-rate oral hygiene, and helps visitors find highly qualified general dentists near where they live.

The AGD is a member of the Partnership for Healthy Mouths, Healthy Lives, a first-of-its-kind national dental coalition composed of 37 leading dental health organizations. Look for more information about the Kids' Healthy Mouths campaign at www.2min2x.org.

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