What Is Involved in a Tooth Extraction? | Core Dental

Canonical: https://www.coredental.com.au/whats-involved-tooth-extraction-procedure/

Details:

A tooth extraction is a dental procedure that removes one or more teeth from the mouth. Having a tooth taken out can feel confronting, but in many cases it is a straightforward procedure. At Core Dental your dentist first reviews your medical history, examines the tooth and the structures around it, and often takes an X-ray to judge how complex the extraction is. Simpler extractions can often be done by a general dentist, while some complex cases may be referred to an oral and maxillofacial surgeon. Your dentist will explain what applies to you.

Why might a tooth need to be extracted?

A dentist may recommend removing a tooth when it cannot be repaired or kept healthy, for example because of advanced decay, infection, gum disease, a fracture, crowding or a wisdom tooth that is impacted or causing problems. Extraction is usually considered when other options are not suitable. Your dentist can talk with you about whether the tooth could be saved and what the alternatives are, including replacing the tooth afterwards.

What does the dentist assess before an extraction?

Before the procedure your dentist looks at:

Your medical history , including medicines, allergies and any conditions that could affect healing or the choice of anaesthetic. Please bring a current medicines list.

The tooth to be removed , including its position, its condition and its roots.

The surrounding structures , such as the neighbouring teeth, gums and bone, usually with the help of an X-ray.

This assessment helps decide how complex the extraction is. It also helps decide whether a general dentist can carry it out or whether a referral to an oral and maxillofacial surgeon is needed. Complex cases may include some wisdom teeth or teeth that have previously had root canal treatment.

What happens during a tooth extraction?

Every case is different, but a typical extraction goes like this:

Your dentist explains the plan, what you may feel and what the risks are, and answers your questions.

The area is numbed with local anaesthetic. Other comfort options may be discussed, and some of our sites offer sleep dentistry , so ask us if you feel anxious.

The dentist loosens the tooth and removes it. You may feel pressure and movement, but you should not feel sharp pain. Tell your dentist if you do.

Some extractions need a more involved approach, for example if the tooth is broken or sits below the gum, and the dentist will explain this beforehand.

After the tooth is out, you are given instructions on caring for the area and managing bleeding.

What should you do after a tooth extraction?

Your dentist will give you written or verbal aftercare advice that suits your procedure. Typical advice covers keeping the area clean, being careful with food and drink for a time, avoiding disturbing the blood clot that forms in the socket and resting. If you have heavy bleeding that does not stop, severe pain that is getting worse, fever or swelling that spreads, contact us or seek urgent care, and call 000 for difficulty breathing or swallowing. Read more in our guides to recovery following teeth extractions and recovering from wisdom tooth extraction .

Can a missing tooth be replaced?

Often it can. Depending on which tooth was removed, options may include a dental implant , a bridge or a denture. Your dentist can talk through the choices at your assessment so that you can plan the replacement while the extraction is being arranged.

How can we help?

If you have a painful, broken or infected tooth, or have been told you need an extraction, our team can assess you at any of our nine Core Dental practices. We quote before treatment starts and offer interest-free payment plans. See our general tooth extraction and wisdom tooth extraction pages, call 13 13 16 or book online.

Further detail from Core Dental

The following points are drawn from Core Dental's own published material on this topic. They are included here for completeness, and anything that applies to your own treatment should be confirmed with your clinician.

All tooth extraction procedures start the same way by providing local anaesthesia to your tooth and the surrounding tissues. The dentist will use a numbing gel where the needle will be placed to help maximise your comfort during the injection. You will be numb in the area of the injection for a few hours, so it is important that you do not consume hot foods or drinks immediately after the extraction as you may burn yourself without realising. Once the injections have been provided, the gums around the tooth to be extracted will be tested to ensure they are fully numb.

For example, if your lower back tooth has been anaesthetised, the dentist may ask if your lip is feeling fat, tingly or rubbery. After it has been confirmed that your tooth is fully numb, your dentist will start using instruments to loosen your tooth. You will feel a lot of pushing forces against your tooth. Once the tooth is sufficiently mobile, the dentist will use forceps on the tooth to remove it from your mouth.

In some cases, if the tooth is difficult to remove, a surgical extraction may be commenced. After the tooth has been removed, the extraction socket may be rinsed and a piece of gauze placed on the extraction site until any bleeding has stopped.

Why the first 24 hours matter more than the rest

Most of what can go wrong after an extraction is decided in the first day, and almost all of it comes back to one thing: the blood clot that forms in the empty socket. That clot is the dressing. Everything in the aftercare advice below exists to protect it.

The Victorian Department of Health publishes the aftercare it recommends after a tooth is removed. Its suggestions, in its own words:

"Take pain-relieving medication if needed (and on advice from your oral health professional)."

"Bite on the gauze to help stop bleeding, and other instructions that you may be given after the tooth is removed."

"Avoid excessive rinsing, sucking through a straw or spitting as that can cause the blot clot to not form, or come loose." (The spelling is the Department's; it means the blood clot.)

"Hold warm salty water in your mouth. Do this after meals and no earlier than 24 hours after surgery."

"Eat soft, easy-to-chew foods for the next few days to keep the area clean from food particles."

"Don't smoke for 48 hours after the surgery."

"Avoid alcohol and excessive physical activity."

Two of those are worth drawing out, because they are the ones people most often get wrong.

Rinsing is not harmless. The instinct after any mouth procedure is to rinse it clean. The advice is the opposite for the first day, and the salt-water rinse has a stated start time — "no earlier than 24 hours after surgery". Straws and spitting matter for the same reason: suction and pressure can lift a clot that has only just formed.

Soreness is expected, not a complication. The Department notes that "it is normal for your jaw and gum to be sore, swollen and bleed a little for a few days after having a wisdom tooth out". Knowing that in advance is the difference between a worrying night and an expected one.

What we will add to this is the part the general advice cannot cover: your own medical history, the medicines you take, which tooth it was and how it came out. Ask us for instructions specific to your extraction, and follow those where they differ from any general guidance.

Source: Better Health Channel (Victorian Department of Health), Wisdom teeth, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (page reviewed 3 June 2022; accessed 4 November 2026).

Dry socket: what it is, and who is more likely to get it

The complication people ask us about by name is dry socket. It is worth describing plainly, because it is both uncomfortable and treatable, and because knowing the signs means you call us rather than waiting it out.

The Department of Health describes it this way: "One possible complication of wisdom teeth removal is a dry socket (alveolar osteitis), when the area where the tooth came from doesn't heal properly causing severe pain and a bad smell from the area. This happens more often in people who smoke or have difficulty in healing. Dry socket can be successfully treated by your oral health professional."

Three things follow from that description.

The pain is distinctive. Ordinary post-extraction soreness eases day by day. Dry socket tends to arrive as severe pain some days after the extraction, often with a bad taste or smell. A pain that is getting worse rather than better is the signal to call.

Smoking is named explicitly. It is the one risk factor the Department singles out, alongside difficulty healing generally. That is the reasoning behind the 48-hour advice above, and it is also why we ask about smoking before an extraction rather than afterwards.

It is treatable. The Department states dry socket "can be successfully treated by your oral health professional". If you think you have it, the answer is an appointment, not endurance.

If you develop severe pain, a bad smell or taste, swelling that is increasing, or bleeding that will not settle, call us on 13 13 16. If you have difficulty breathing or swallowing, uncontrollable bleeding or a serious facial injury, call 000.

Source: Better Health Channel (Victorian Department of Health), Wisdom teeth, betterhealth.vic.gov.au (page reviewed 3 June 2022; accessed 4 November 2026).

Frequently asked questions

Is a tooth extraction painful?

The area is numbed with local anaesthetic, so you should feel pressure rather than sharp pain during the procedure. Some soreness afterwards is common and your dentist will explain how to manage it.

Who removes a tooth, a dentist or a surgeon?

Many extractions can be carried out by a general dentist. Some complex cases, such as certain wisdom teeth or teeth that have had root canal treatment, may be referred to an oral and maxillofacial surgeon.

Will I need an X-ray before an extraction?

Often yes. An X-ray helps your dentist see the roots, the surrounding bone and nearby structures so they can judge how complex the extraction is and plan it safely.

Can I eat after having a tooth taken out?

Your dentist will advise you based on your procedure. Many people are asked to be careful with hot, hard and chewy foods for a time and to protect the area while it heals.

Do I need to replace the tooth after it is removed?

Not always, but a gap can affect chewing, appearance and the position of neighbouring teeth. Your dentist can explain replacement options such as an implant, bridge or denture.

Why should I avoid straws and rinsing after an extraction?

Because both can disturb the blood clot in the socket. The Victorian Department of Health advises you "avoid excessive rinsing, sucking through a straw or spitting as that can cause the blot clot to not form, or come loose" — its spelling of blood clot. The clot is what protects the socket while it heals, so the first day is about leaving it alone.

When can I start rinsing with salt water?

The Department's advice is to "hold warm salty water in your mouth. Do this after meals and no earlier than 24 hours after surgery." The timing is the point: a rinse that would help on day two can dislodge a clot on day one. Follow any specific instructions we give you for your own extraction.

How long should I avoid smoking after an extraction?

The Department's advice is "don't smoke for 48 hours after the surgery". Smoking is also the one risk factor it names for dry socket, which "happens more often in people who smoke or have difficulty in healing". If you smoke, tell us before the extraction so we can talk through what to expect.

Is some swelling and bleeding normal afterwards?

Yes. The Department notes it "is normal for your jaw and gum to be sore, swollen and bleed a little for a few days" after a wisdom tooth is removed. What is not expected is pain that worsens rather than settles, a bad smell or taste, increasing swelling, or bleeding that will not stop. Call us on 13 13 16 if any of those happen.

Does every wisdom tooth need to come out?

No. The Department of Health states plainly that "some wisdom teeth do not cause problems and do not need to be taken out", and that "X-rays will help to tell if wisdom teeth might cause problems". It lists the reasons a removal may be recommended: not enough room for the tooth to come through properly, or pain, infection or damage to other teeth. The decision rests on an examination and imaging of your own mouth.

Related services and further reading

General tooth extraction

Wisdom tooth extraction

Costs involved with wisdom tooth removal

How long to recover from wisdom tooth extraction

Recovery following teeth extractions

Cracked tooth treatment

How will I know if I need my wisdom teeth removed?

All about dental implants

Specialist care

Core Dental at a glance

Nine Core Dental clinics across Melbourne: Southbank, South Melbourne, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs, Epping, Wyndham, Berwick, Bayside and Glenferrie.

Open six days a week: Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings.

We quote before treatment starts, offer interest-free payment plans and claim from your health fund on the spot with HICAPS.

Call 13 13 16 or book online.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16
Booking	Online via coredental.com.au, or call 13 13 16
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday 8.00am to 1.30pm (Bayside Saturday 8.30am to 1.30pm), Sunday closed
Clinics	Southbank , South Melbourne , Caroline Springs , Carrum Downs , Epping , Wyndham , Berwick , Bayside , Glenferrie

Results, recovery times and potential risks vary for each individual. This information is general in nature and is intended for people over 18. Seek advice from a qualified, AHPRA-registered practitioner before proceeding.

What does a dentist check before taking out a tooth?

A Core Dental dentist reviews your medical history, examines the tooth and the surrounding structures, and usually takes an X-ray. This tells us how complex the extraction is and whether it can be done in our clinic or needs referral.

When might an extraction be referred to an oral and maxillofacial surgeon?

Complex cases, such as some wisdom teeth or teeth that have had root canal treatment, may be referred to an oral and maxillofacial surgeon. Your Core Dental dentist will explain whether this applies to you.

What anaesthetic is used for a tooth extraction at Core Dental?

Local anaesthetic is used to numb the area, so you feel pressure rather than sharp pain. Core Dental also offers sleep dentistry at select sites for anxious patients, so ask when you book.

What should I bring to a tooth extraction appointment?

Bring a current list of your medicines, details of your allergies and medical conditions, and any recent X-rays or referral letters. Tell Core Dental if you take blood thinners or have a heart condition.

How do I look after the socket after an extraction?

Follow the aftercare advice your Core Dental dentist gives you. It commonly covers protecting the blood clot, careful eating and drinking, keeping the area clean and when to call us about bleeding or worsening pain.

When should I contact Core Dental after an extraction?

Contact us if bleeding does not stop, pain is increasing, swelling spreads or you have a fever. Call 13 13 16. For difficulty breathing or swallowing call 000.

Can Core Dental replace a tooth after it is removed?

Our dentists can discuss replacement options such as implants, bridges and dentures at your assessment. Which option suits you depends on the tooth, your gums and bone, and your health.

How do I book a tooth extraction assessment at Core Dental?

Call Core Dental on 13 13 16 or book online at coredental.com.au. We are open Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings. If you are in pain, tell us so we can arrange a suitable time soon.