Consent Information - Patient Copy

Extractions of Adult Teeth

1. Why do teeth need extracting?
When a tooth has been damaged either by infection (from tooth decay) or trauma (from a knock or bump), the dental professional will provide advice as to the best treatment for the tooth. If the damage to the tooth is too great, the best option may be to extract the tooth.

2. How are adult teeth extracted?
The dentist may take x-rays of the tooth that needs extracting to look at the position of the tooth, the bone, nerves and blood vessels around the tooth.

The tooth and surrounding area will be numbed (an injection) by local anaesthetic. Once the area around the tooth is numb, the tooth is loosened with movements and pressure. The loosened tooth is then removed. Following the extraction, a stitch may be required to close the hole.

There may be cases where a ‘surgical extraction’ is required to close the hole. Following an extraction, the patient will be asked to bite down on a piece of sterile gauze to help stop the bleeding and form a clot.

3. What are the risks and complications of this procedure?
The wound normally heals within approximately two weeks. Complications may prolong the healing.

- **Dry socket**: occurs when a blood clot does not form in the hole where the tooth was or the blood clot is disrupted. The bone underneath will be exposed to air and food. This can be very painful and can cause a bad taste and/or odour in your mouth. A dry socket needs to be treated.

- **Infection**: keeping the hole where the tooth was clean and free of debris will help avoid an infection. Signs and symptoms of an infection are fever, swelling and redness. This is usually treated with antibiotics.

- **Temporary numbness**: can occur due to the irritation of the nerves during the extraction. It is usually only temporary and will return to normal within a few days. Seek advice from the dental clinic you attended if numbness persists.

- **Jaw pain**: can occur due to the irritation of the nerves and the movement of the jaw during the extraction. It is usually only temporary and can be treated with over the counter pain relief such as Panadol.

- **Root fragments**: a piece of root may break off during the extraction due to the length or weakness of the roots. The fragment can often be removed without any further complications. However, if it lies close to a nerve or a sinus cavity the dentist may decide to leave the fragment in place.

- **Prolonged or permanent nerve damage**: a small percentage of people may, inspite of all precautions, experience partial or total loss of feeling in the area served by the nerves in close proximity to the extraction site. Irritation to these nerves during the extraction can cause permanent or prolonged numbness or a tingling sensation to the lip, tongue, cheek, chin, gums, or teeth.

- **Death** as a result of this procedure is very rare.

4. What are the risks and complications of a local anaesthetic during a dental procedure?
This procedure will require a local anaesthetic.

- **Damage to lips and cheeks**: you may bite or rub the numbed area without realising the damage you are causing. Children may need to be supervised until the numbness has worn off.

- **Failure of local anaesthetic**: this may require a further injection of anaesthetic or a different method of anaesthesia to be used.

- **Bruising**: if you take any drug used to thin your blood, you are more likely to get a bruise as this medication may affect the way your body clots your blood. Applying a cold pack to the area will help to minimise the bruising.

- **Nerve damage**: if nerve damage happens, it is usually temporary and will get better over a period of weeks to months. Damage may cause weakness and/or numbness of the mouth, lips, tongue or face that the nerve goes to. Permanent nerve damage rarely happens.

- **Infection at site of injection**: this is uncommon however can be treated with antibiotics.

- **Allergy to the local anaesthetic solution**: is a rare complication and medical attention should be sought immediately.

5. What care is needed after an extraction of an adult tooth?
Children will require adult supervision immediately after an extraction of an adult tooth.

Further information is available from your dentist.

Notes to talk to my dentist about:

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