

# Extracting a Single Tooth

Removing a tooth is sometimes necessary to preserve the health of your mouth and remaining teeth. With modern dental techniques, it should be a comfortable and effective procedure.

## When tooth extraction is needed

Generally, we recommend treatments that will save teeth, but when a tooth is so damaged that it cannot be saved, extraction is the best choice. Extraction might be best for:

- Teeth that are fractured below the gumline
- Severe tooth decay
- Advanced periodontal disease
- Primary teeth that are too crowded or not falling out properly
- An impacted wisdom tooth



*The area is thoroughly numbed*



*Carefully follow instructions*

## The procedure

Before we start the extraction procedure, we may offer nitrous oxide to relax you, and we'll numb the area with anesthetic to keep you comfortable. After several minutes, we check the area to make sure that it's completely numb. During the procedure, you'll feel pressure when the tooth is removed, but you shouldn't feel any pain at all. If you do, we'll stop and give you more anesthetic.

If the tooth hasn't yet come in through the gums, we'll start by making a small incision. To remove the tooth, we'll use an instrument called an elevator, which is placed next to your tooth and is used to gently loosen it. Then, we use forceps to grip the tooth carefully and remove it.

Sometimes, if your tooth's roots are curved or are held tightly in the socket, it's helpful to cut the tooth into sections before removing them. If an incision was necessary, we may close it with a couple of stitches once the tooth is removed.

## Taking care of yourself after the extraction

To minimize problems after your tooth is removed, you'll need to follow our post-operative instructions carefully, especially for the first 24 hours. These instructions will explain how to control bleeding, how to relieve pain, minimize swelling, and prevent dry socket. You'll also learn what you can and cannot eat.

## The benefits of extracting teeth

An extraction is sometimes the best treatment choice for preventing many future dental problems. Depending on your situation, these problems might include the risk of infection, the spread of periodontal disease, cysts in the jawbone, or severely crowded or misaligned teeth.