

# Coronectomy

## Information for patients

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### What is a coronectomy?

Coronectomy is the term used to describe the partial removal of a tooth. The top part of a tooth, which is usually visible in the mouth (the crown) is removed and the roots are left in place. This is a different approach to the one we normally use. We have chosen this approach because we suspect the normal approach might have a higher risk of damaging the nerve that supplies feeling and sensation to your lower lip and chin.

### Why am I being offered a coronectomy?

The nerve that supplies feeling to your lower lip and chin runs through the lower jawbone close to the roots of lower molar teeth, particularly the wisdom teeth. This means that the nerve is at risk of damage during surgery to remove a wisdom tooth. If the nerve is damaged, you may be left with numbness, tingling, pins and needles, discomfort, burning or an intense nerve pain (neuralgia) affecting your lip and chin on that side. This can be temporary or permanent and can greatly affect your quality of life.

Your surgeon thinks coronectomy may be a treatment option for you. Your surgeon has determined from your x-rays that you are at a higher than normal risk of nerve damage from complete removal of the tooth.

### What does the surgery involve?

Your surgeon will make the area numb with local anaesthetic injections into the gum. A cut will be made in the gum to fully uncover the tooth. A small amount of the jaw bone will be drilled away and the top part of the tooth will be removed, leaving the roots behind. The roots will be smoothed down to below the level of the jawbone and the gum is stitched fully closed with dissolving stitches, covering the roots.

### Are there any complications?

- All operations can cause some pain, discomfort and swelling and you may require several days off work. You may experience facial bruising and difficulty opening your mouth. We recommend a soft diet for a few days after surgery. These symptoms tend to be worse during the first few days after surgery and you should slowly recover over two to three weeks. Your surgeon will give you instructions on how to care for the surgical site
- Infection may occur following the procedure. It usually starts 3-5 days after the operation. This can usually be managed by your dentist but occasionally may need to be treated in hospital and require surgical treatment
- Although the coronectomy surgery aims to reduce the risk of nerve damage, there is still always a risk of nerve damage to the tongue, chin and lower lip with any type of wisdom tooth surgery, including coronectomy

- The roots may loosen during the procedure. If this happens the root will need to be removed to minimise the risk of infection. This means there is a higher risk of nerve damage occurring
- The ideal outcome is that the root remains buried in the jaw bone without causing problems. In some cases, the root can move over time and come through the gum into the mouth. This piece of root may need to be removed. The risk of nerve damage should be lower if the root has moved away from its original position close to the nerve
- The buried root may become infected and require removal. This can happen very early on after the initial coronectomy surgery or can be delayed. The risk of nerve damage would be the same as if the whole tooth were extracted in one go at the time of first surgery.

For further information, please contact:

Department of Oral Surgery, Edinburgh Dental Institute

**Telephone: 0131 536 1129**

## **Cancellation**

While we make every effort to avoid this where possible, there is always a risk that your operation may be cancelled at short notice. This is due to either emergency patients who require urgent surgery or other reasons which are beyond our control. We realise that this can cause distress and inconvenience, but in the event that your surgery is postponed, you will be offered a new date as soon as possible.

## **Keeping your Appointment**

If you cannot keep your appointment, or have been given one that is unsuitable, please change it by phoning the number on your appointment letter. Your call will give someone else the chance to be seen and will help us keep waiting times to a minimum.

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