

After your general anaesthetic

Call Centre opening hours

Monday - Thursday
8.30am - 5.00pm

Friday
8.30am - 4.30pm

Tel: 0333 405 0290

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(Smile:Together)

Tackling oral health inequality for
healthier happier communities

After your general anaesthetic

Please ensure that you follow all the instructions that the nurse gives you after your general anaesthetic.

You should stay at home for 24 hours after a general anaesthetic and children should be with a responsible adult to look after them.

It is advised to have something to eat and drink once you get home, but you must take care not to bite or burn yourself if you have had a local anaesthetic around the extraction site.

Your mouth may feel uncomfortable after your treatment and the nurse will give you after care advice about pain relief.

You may feel tired, dizzy and unsteady for a few hours after your general anaesthetic and occasionally may have a mild sore throat.

You may also have a bruised hand where the cannula was inserted.

If there are any medical concerns following the general anaesthetic call 111 or go to hospital.

If you have any additional worries or concerns once you are at home, please contact us by calling 0333 405 0290 from Monday – Thursday 8.30 am – 5pm and Friday 8.30 am – 4.30pm. Alternatively, our out of hours services operates Monday – Friday evenings from 5.30pm – 7.30pm on Saturday, Sunday and bank holidays from 8.30am – 4.30pm. During these times there will be a dentist on call who will help you with any concerns you may have. Out of these hours please use the 111 service.

After extraction instructions

You are likely to feel uncomfortable after the extraction so if necessary, use suitable painkillers at home, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen as advised by the dentist. You need to rest but don't lie down flat.

A clean mouth heals more rapidly than a dirty one so start brushing again as soon as possible. And remember 'spit don't rinse'. It is important that you don't rinse out your mouth after the extraction.

After your extraction you should avoid vigorous exercise and refrain from drinking alcohol for 24 hours.

If you are a smoker, please avoid smoking for 48 hours after the extraction to enable healing to occur.

Where local anaesthetic has been used, you will feel numb. Take care to avoid biting or burning your lips, tongue, or cheeks.

If you feel small pieces of bone at the extraction site, these will go with time.

When you go to bed at night, sleep with your head raised (blood stains on your pillow are normal and so you may wish to cover your pillow, perhaps with an old towel).

Starting the day after your extraction use a warm saltwater mouthwash. Take a level teaspoonful of salt and add it to a glass of warm water. Use this to bathe the extraction sites. You must do this after every meal and at bedtime. Do not rinse vigorously.

Occasionally, a painful infection may occur in the tooth socket a few days after the extraction. This is unpredictable. Please telephone for advice on: 0333 405 0290.

If the area becomes swollen or you are worried about how the socket is healing, please telephone for advice on: 0333 405 0290.

If you have your own dentist please make arrangements to go back for regular check-ups or if you do not have your own dentist and would like to put your name down on the waiting list for an NHS dentist please contact 0333 006 3300 or email accessdentalhelpline@nhs.net

If excessive bleeding occurs:

Avoid all exertion. Sit down but do not lie down.

Clean your mouth with a damp cloth or handkerchief to see which part of your mouth is bleeding and spit out, but do not rinse.

Take a damp handkerchief or piece of cloth and make a small pad. Place it on the bleeding point. Sit down and bite firmly on the pad. Maintain constant, steady pressure for 30 minutes.

If the bleeding continues for more than 2 hours, contact us on 0333 405 0290 or 111 if after 7:30pm on weekdays and after 4:30pm on weekends.

Safe drinks and snacks

Water and milk are the only safe drinks for your teeth. Tea and coffee without sugar are also safe for teeth but should be avoided in children under 5 years of age.

Artificial sweeteners may be used instead of sugar. Ones containing xylitol are better e.g. Total Sweet.

All other drinks contain sugar or acids and will harm your teeth. If you choose to drink anything other than milk/water, keep these types of drinks to have with a main meal only.

Keep all sugary food e.g. sweets, chocolate, biscuits, cake etc. to meal times only. Remember it is the number of times each day that you eat/drink sugary foods & drinks which causes dental decay, not the amount you have each time.

Remember that sugar is added to a lot of foods you would not expect to find it in – so always check the packaging for details. There are sugar smart apps which you can download if you would like more information.

Carry a bottle of water with you during the day to drink. Water from the tap or still, non-flavoured bottled water is best.

Tooth brushing

Brush all surfaces of your teeth including the biting surfaces and outer and inner surfaces to remove all the germs (bacteria) and bits of food from your teeth.

It is especially important to brush where the teeth and gums meet as well as your teeth. Brush your gums with the toothbrush. Spit out the toothpaste, and do not rinse your mouth with water or mouthwash.

If you want to use mouthwash, use a fluoride mouthwash at a different time to toothbrushing.

Bedtime is the most important time to brush. It is important to remove as much plaque and food debris before sleeping.

Saliva helps to protect your teeth. You do not make a lot of spit (saliva) when you sleep.

Teeth should be cleaned for a minimum of 2 minutes, at least twice a day. Some people may take a longer time to brush their teeth.

Children are unable to clean their teeth effectively until they are about 7 years old (around the same time they have the coordination to do good joined up writing). Until then they will need to have their teeth brushed by an adult every day.

Fluoride Toothpaste

Toothpaste contains fluoride which helps the teeth stay strong. It only works while it is touching the teeth. The longer it stays on the teeth the better.

All children should use a fluoride toothpaste containing 1000- 1500 parts per million fluoride. This is written as eg 1450 ppm fluoride. Check on the tube or packaging.

Under 3 years old should use a smear of toothpaste containing 1000-1500 ppm fluoride toothpaste.

From the age of 3 children should use a pea-sized amount of 1350-1500 ppm fluoride toothpaste.