

Dental Extraction

What to expect



Information Guide

Dental Extraction including Wisdom Teeth

This guide provides information for Medibank Private Members and their families about dental extraction including information specifically about wisdom teeth.

It is important that you're well prepared for your healthcare experience, and know what to expect at key stages prior to, during and following dental extraction.

It is also important that you discuss your particular circumstances in detail with the healthcare professionals who will be treating and caring for you. You should be confident in the treatment choices you make with your healthcare team and ensure that they are aware of your individual needs.

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The information in this guide does not represent which products or services may be covered under your level of Medibank Private cover. Further, Medibank Private does not pay Benefits for a number of products and services e.g. doctor consultations when not admitted to hospital.

As a member of Medibank Private, your entitlement to Benefits will depend on your type (hospital and/or extras) and level of cover and is subject to our Fund Rules and Policies. Premium rates, Benefits and the Fund Rules and Policies are subject to change from time to time. A copy of our Fund Rules is available at our Retail Centres or at medibank.com.au

Call us on 13 23 31 before you go to hospital to find out what you're covered for, any likely additional costs you may have to pay as well as for any other advice you may need.

The information provided in this guide is current at the time of issue, July 2008.

Dental Extraction

What is a dental extraction?

A dental extraction is the permanent removal of a tooth from its socket in the jawbone. In broad terms there are two categories of extraction:

- **Routine general extraction** where the tooth is visible in the mouth and easily grasped by forceps. Such extractions are routinely performed by general dentists under local anaesthetic
- **Surgical extraction** is required when a tooth has not yet broken through the gum or is not easily removed. Surgical extractions are performed by specialist dentists with particular expertise in this area and may require a general anaesthetic

Why is a dental extraction performed?

An extraction may be required for a range of circumstances including:

- tooth fracture, gum disease or decay
- wisdom teeth (see page 9 of this guide)
- abscessed or infected tooth
- orthodontic treatment. Permanent or deciduous teeth may need to be removed to allow other teeth to be moved into place
- extra teeth. Extraction may be required in some cases where the mouth is overcrowded

Referral to a specialist

Surgical extraction is a specialised procedure usually performed by a suitably qualified general dentist, an oral surgeon or an oral and maxillo-facial surgeon (OMFS). Your dentist or the doctor you consult should refer you to a suitable specialist.

As well as advice from your dentist or doctor, you may wish to know more about surgical extraction and what you can expect from your specialist.

Further information on dental health is available online at: **www.healthinsite.gov.au**

Cost of treatment may also be an important consideration when selecting a specialist. A list of oral surgeons who have participated in Medibank Private's GapCover Scheme in the past can be found on our website **medibank.com.au**

Note: Specialists can choose to participate in GapCover on a **case-by-case** basis.

More information about GapCover can also be found on our website or in our *'Going to Hospital'* booklet.

Costs may differ depending on a number of factors including whether the procedure is conducted by a dentist or surgeon and whether you are entitled to benefits for dental procedures under your level of cover. Check with Medibank Private on 13 23 31 to find out what you are covered for under your hospital and/or extras insurance.

What should I discuss with my dentist, doctor or specialist?

- discuss the treatment options for your condition and why dental extraction is being recommended
- what are the possible outcomes for each of the options you have discussed
- what is the likelihood of each of these outcomes occurring
- why your doctor has recommended a particular specialist in your case
- what experience does the specialist have, for example number of dental extractions performed and outcomes for patients, including complication rates
- possible risks and outcomes associated with the procedure
- when any pathology results will be known
- typical recovery time
- arrangements for getting home and after care
- possible further treatment

Ideally, you should make sure that you fully understand the procedure that is going to be performed. Your specialist should explain in detail how the extraction is done, and what preparation you should make. Your specialist may provide you with written material to read at home.

Your Medibank Private *'Going to Hospital'* booklet contains further questions that you may wish to ask your doctor, including information on obtaining informed financial consent.

Where is it done?

Routine and minor surgical extractions and procedures performed under local anaesthetic are usually performed in a dental surgery. Where a general anaesthetic is required, the extraction will be performed at a day surgery or hospital depending on the complexity of the case.

How long will it take?

Time required for the procedure will vary with individual circumstances, including number of teeth to be extracted and reason for the extraction. Your specialist will advise you about the duration of the procedure.

Who is involved?

For procedures carried out as an inpatient at either a day surgery or hospital, the following healthcare professionals are usually involved:

- an oral surgeon for multiple or complex extractions
- a dentist for less complex cases
- a dentist or anaesthetist will administer sedative medication or an anaesthetist will administer a general anaesthetic depending on the procedure
- nurses will assist during the procedure and recovery

How to prepare

Your specialist should provide detailed advice on the preparation required in your particular case. In general, you:

- will need to fast (have nothing to eat or drink), for six hours prior to the oral surgery
- you should obtain medical advice about taking prescribed medications prior to the procedure
- your dentist may require you to commence a course of antibiotics prior to admission

What happens on arrival at the day surgery or hospital?

When you arrive at day surgery or hospital, you will be admitted. Necessary paperwork will need to be completed.

Prior to the surgery your specialist will ask you to sign a consent form, indicating that you give him or her permission to perform the procedure and that you understand all potential risks and complications.

What to expect during a dental extraction at a day surgery or hospital?

Preparation for the extraction includes having an intravenous line usually put in the back of the hand to receive a sedative injection. The anaesthetist will generally see you before the procedure to discuss the anaesthetic procedure.

During the extraction itself, the oral surgeon will make an incision in the gum tissue above the tooth to allow the tooth to be grasped, freed from surrounding tissue, and extracted. Where roots of the tooth are curved or the tooth is impacted, small portions of the surrounding bone may be removed using a drill or bone cutting knife (osteotome) to free the tooth.

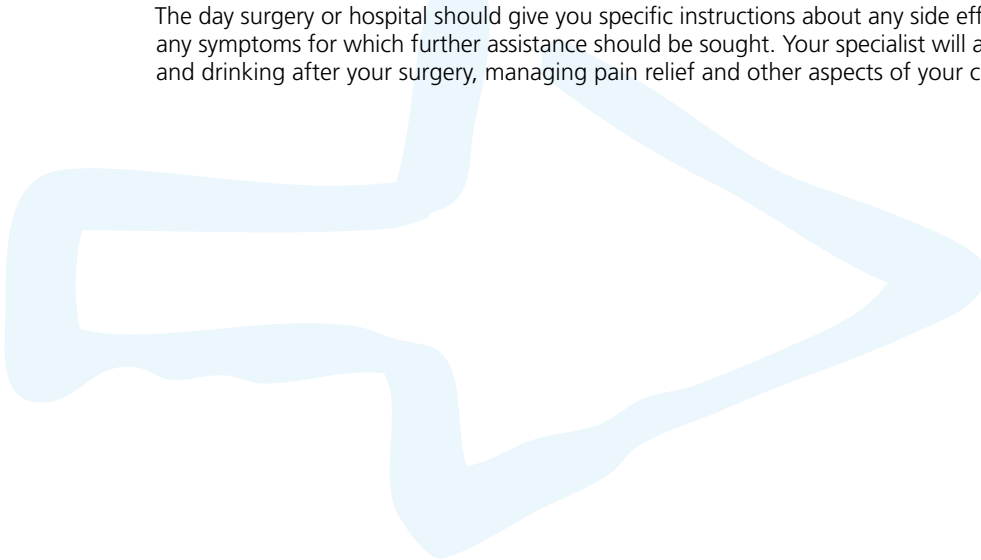
When the extraction procedure is finished, the oral surgeon closes the incision using dissolvable sutures and covers the suture line with gauze pads called dental packs.

What happens after a dental extraction at a day surgery or hospital?

You will wake up in a recovery area where you will continue to be closely monitored by nursing staff until you have recovered from the anaesthetic. Usually your mouth will still be numb when you wake up.

Most people go home on the same day. Whether you go home that day or stay overnight, it may, depending on the procedure and anaesthetic, be necessary for a friend or relative to accompany you when you leave, and to spend the first night at home with you.

The day surgery or hospital should give you specific instructions about any side effects which can be expected, and any symptoms for which further assistance should be sought. Your specialist will advise you about resuming eating and drinking after your surgery, managing pain relief and other aspects of your care once you are at home.



Extraction of Wisdom Teeth

The following sections of this guide provide information for Medibank Private Members and their families specifically about extraction of wisdom teeth. This material should be read in conjunction with the general information contained earlier in this guide relating to dental extraction.

What are wisdom teeth?

Wisdom teeth are the third and final set of molars to erupt, usually when a person is aged between 16 and 20. There are normally two wisdom teeth in the upper jaw and two in the lower, although some people have fewer than four and some have none at all.

As wisdom teeth are the last permanent teeth to erupt, there may not be enough room left in your mouth to accommodate them, leading to impaction. Impacted wisdom teeth are trapped beneath the gum tissue by other teeth or bone and may jeopardise the health of adjacent teeth. Swelling, tenderness and infection may occur with impacted wisdom teeth. Wisdom teeth which only partially erupt, or emerge crooked, may also lead to painful crowding and peridontic disease.

How do I know if I have wisdom teeth?

You should seek advice from your dentist about the positioning of your wisdom teeth. Your dentist may periodically take an X-ray to evaluate the alignment of your wisdom teeth, and may elect to refer you to an oral surgeon for an opinion.

Under what circumstances are wisdom teeth removed?

Extraction may be recommended where:

- the jaw is not of sufficient size to allow wisdom teeth to erupt fully and in alignment useful for chewing and crushing food
- wisdom teeth emerge only partially, allowing an opening for bacteria to enter around the tooth and cause infection. Pain, swelling, jaw stiffness and general illness may result
- wisdom teeth are poorly aligned and damage adjacent teeth, the jawbone or nerves
- fluid filled sacs called cysts have formed (in some cases extraction will also be recommended to minimise the potential for cysts to form). Cysts can destroy surrounding teeth, jawbone and nerves, and if untreated a tumour may develop, requiring more complex surgery to remove

Teeth removed before age 20 have less developed roots and extraction at this time may result in fewer complications. Your dentist or oral surgeon may recommend that your wisdom teeth be extracted before any problems develop. Removal of crowded or impacted wisdom teeth should not affect your bite or oral health in the future.

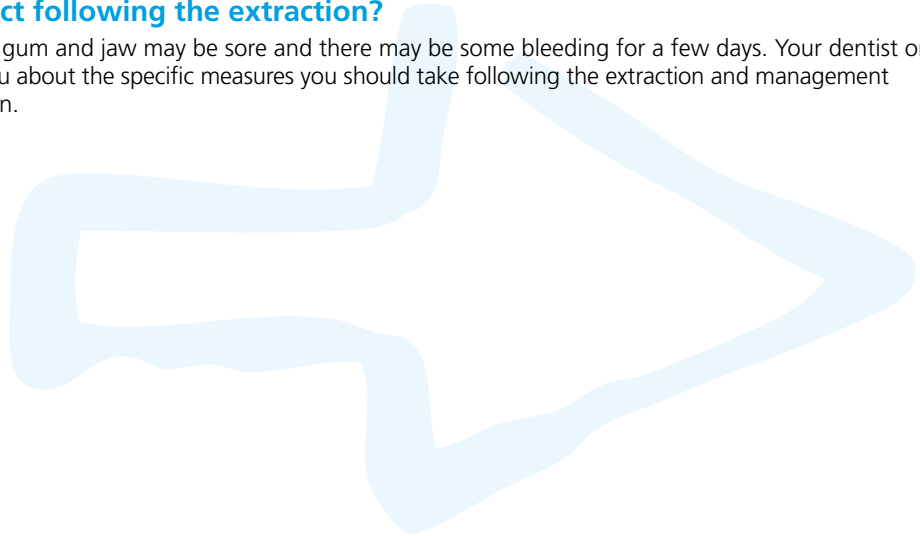
How are wisdom teeth removed?

Depending on your particular circumstances, including positioning of your teeth and complexity of your case, your dentist or oral surgeon will advise whether the extraction is to be performed using a local anaesthetic, or under a general anaesthetic.

A wisdom tooth that is fully erupted through the gum can usually be extracted with the same ease as any other tooth. However, where the tooth is underneath the gums and embedded in the jawbone, an incision in the gum and removal of bone lying over the tooth is required.

What can I expect following the extraction?

Post operatively, your gum and jaw may be sore and there may be some bleeding for a few days. Your dentist or oral surgeon will advise you about the specific measures you should take following the extraction and management of post-procedure pain.





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