

Managing Toothache during lockdown

Tips for managing dental problems until you can see a dentist

Accessing care

As well as reducing risk to staff and patients, this will also prevent necessary travel in an attempt to reduce virus transmission. This information aims to advise people in pain who still need to access care and also support people in managing minor symptoms at home.

If you need emergency care:

- Have you or anyone in your house been self isolating?
- Do you have any symptoms?
- High temperature or continuous cough?

If **YES** to any of the above, please call health care authorities. They will direct you to an emergency facility with appropriate protective equipment which will allow staff to treat you safely.

EMERGENCY

What is a dental emergency?



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Urgent dental treatment:

- Facial swelling extending the eye or neck.
- Bleeding following an extraction that does not stop after 20 mins of solid pressure with gauze/clean hankie. A small amount of oozing is normal, just like if you graze your knee.
- Bleeding due to trauma.
- Tooth broken and causing pain, or tooth has fallen out.
- Significant toothache preventing sleep, eating, associated with significant swelling, or fever that cannot be managed with painkillers.

Urgent treatment by other medical professionals:

- Facial swelling affecting vision or breathing, preventing mouth opening more than 2 fingers width.
- Trauma causing loss of consciousness, double vision or vomiting.

Non-urgent treatment (may need to wait):

- Loose or lost crowns, bridges or veneers.
- Broken, rubbing or loose dentures.
- Bleeding gums.
- Broken, loose or lost fillings.
- Chipped teeth with no pain.
- Loose orthodontic wires.

Painkillers



Anti-inflammations (like myprodol) can help reduce sensitivity from teeth. Combining panado and myprodol has also been show to be effective.

There is currently no strong evidence that drugs like panado or myprodol can make COVID-19 worse.

If you have **no coronavirus symptoms**, carry on taking myprodol as normal.

Therefore, until we have more solid information, take panado/myprodol to treat symptoms of coronavirus, unless your doctor has told you that it is not suitable for you.

Painkillers should always be taken in accordance with instructions on the packet. Taking too many tablets, or taking medications incorrectly **will not improve your symptoms**, and can cause serious stomach and liver injury which can be **life threatening**.



Toothache

If the tooth is extremely sensitive to hot or cold, **antibiotics will not help.**

The decay must be removed and filled.

These home measures may help make symptoms manageable until care can be accessed.

Good cleaning with fluoride toothpaste and reducing sugar intake will help stop decay from getting worse.

If there is a hole in the tooth, or a tooth has cracked and is now sensitive/sharp, a temporary filling can be packed into the space.

These can usually be found at pharmacies.

Desensitising/sensitive toothpaste (like sensodyne repair and protect) can help.

Rub toothpaste directly on the affected area and do not rinse afterwards.

Anaesthetic gels or toothpastes can help ease the pain.



Wisdom Teeth



Wisdom tooth pain is usually due to inflammation of the gum over the erupting tooth, which can be worsened by trauma from biting.



Most inflammations can be managed with good home care and should settle in a few days to a week:

- **Excellent cleaning** (even if it is painful to brush, the area must be kept clean to encourage healing)
- **Corsodyl mouthwash** (avoid use for more than 1 week as it may cause staining)
- **Soft diet** (soft food will reduce trauma from biting)
- **Warm salt mouthwash**
- **Painkillers** (ibuprofen or paracetamol following packet instructions)

If you have difficulty swallowing, swelling in your face or cheek or difficulty opening your mouth, call your dentist. You may need antibiotics if the infection is spreading.

Ulcers



Although ulcers can be painful, most ulcers will heal within 7-10 days. Non-healing ulcers/oral lesions present for more than 3 weeks should be assessed by a dentist or doctor.

- Warm salty mouthwash.
- **Excellent cleaning** (even if it is painful to brush, the mouth must be kept clean to encourage healing and prevent more ulcers forming. Be gentle and use a soft/baby toothbrush).
- Find a mouth spray that is purposefully used for mouth ulcers.
- **Soft diet** (soft food will reduce trauma from biting)
- **Painkillers** (ibuprofen or paracetamol following packet instructions)
- **Rubbing dentures** (Denture adhesives may help secure a loose denture. Any sharp edges can be removed using an emery board. Remove dentures when possible if causing trauma.
- **Corsodyl mouthwash** (avoid use for over 1 week as may cause staining)

Pain or bleeding after an extraction



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Continue to take regular painkillers for several days after extraction. It is normal for the pain to be at it's worst at day 3-4.

Some pink spit/oozing is normal after an extraction, but if the socket is bleeding freely, bite hard on gauze or a clean hankie for 20 minutes. If bleeding has not stopped, call your dentist

We cannot provide antibiotics for pain after extractions unless infection is present. We also cannot prescribe antibiotics over the phone without seeing you in person.

If you smoke or rinse too soon after an extraction, you risk a dry socket. This can be very painful and regular painkillers are unlikely to be effective. You should call your dentist for an emergency appointment. Antibiotics will not solve this, as a dressing is needed to cover the exposed bone.

Bleeding Gums:

Bleeding from gums is NOT a dental emergency.

Bleeding gums are usually due to gum disease and will not stop until brushing improves.

Brush 2x a day with fluoride toothpaste for 2 minutes, concentrating especially on the areas that are bleeding.

Use floss or interdental brushes to clean between your teeth every day.

