



**Bradford Teaching Hospitals**  
NHS Foundation Trust

Maxillofacial Unit • Patient Information Leaflet

# Advice for Patients Prior to an Exposure of Impacted Canines



 **SCAN ME**

*This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of your forthcoming treatment and answers to many of the commonly asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer or would like further explanation please ask.*

## The problem

The canine, or eye tooth, normally erupts into the mouth between the ages of 11 and 13. Sometimes one or both canines develop in the wrong position. Often they lie across the roof of the mouth behind the front teeth.

## Why do I need treatment?

One or both of your canines are in the wrong place, therefore it is necessary to help the tooth break through (erupt) into the mouth. If left alone the tooth will not erupt normally and occasionally damage the roots of the front teeth or push them out of position.

## What does the treatment involve?

Helping the tooth erupt into your mouth involves a relatively minor surgical procedure. This usually takes place under a "day case" general anaesthetic at the BRI, ie although you are put to sleep completely you will usually be able to go home on the same day as surgery. While you are asleep the gum lying over the canine will be pushed back. Occasionally some of the bone surrounding the crown of the tooth also needs to be removed.

**The Orthodontist will pull the tooth into the correct position by using one of the following three methods**

1. Bracket and chain. A small bracket is glued to the tooth. Attached to this is a chain which your orthodontist can then use to pull the tooth into the right position. The chain is usually stitched out of the way but it is quite delicate and therefore it is important to be careful when eating for the first few weeks after surgery.

2. A plate. Sometimes a small window will be cut in the gum over the tooth and a plastic “dressing” plate put in place to cover the area. This plate is held in your mouth with clips that attach to some of your back teeth. It is important that you wear the plate all the time except when you take it out to clean your teeth. Without the plate the gum may grow back making it difficult for the orthodontist to move the tooth into position. The plate should be kept in your mouth for 24 hours after surgery before taking it out to clean. The plate should be worn for 1 week post operatively
3. A pack. Sometimes a pack made from gauze soaked in an antiseptic is placed over the tooth after it is exposed. The pack is kept in position with stitches and removed after a week. You must be careful not to dislodge the pack. If this happens you should contact the department for advice.

Sometimes it is necessary to hold the gum back in the right position with stitches at the end of the operation. These are usually dissolvable and take about two weeks to disappear.

## Is there much pain or swelling?

All of the above procedures are not particularly painful but you will obviously experience some soreness afterwards. There is usually very little in the way of swelling. If it is likely to be sore your surgeon will arrange painkillers for you. It is not usually necessary to take antibiotics.

## Are there any things I should do when I get home?

Be careful not to bite numb areas of your mouth. On the day of surgery you should avoid rinsing your mouth out vigorously as this may cause bleeding. You should clean your teeth normally, including those teeth next to the surgery site.

If you find that food catches around the stitches then the area can be gently rinsed with a mouthwash or warm salt water (dissolve a teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water) commencing on the day after surgery.

## Do I need to take any time off school / work?

Usually it will be necessary to take a few days off school/ work and avoid strenuous exercise for this time. Depending on the type of anaesthetic used you may well not be able to drive (24 hours after intravenous sedation and for 48 hours after a general anaesthetic).

## Will I need another appointment?

You will need to return 1 to 2 weeks after surgery to have the area checked by your orthodontist. Further appointments after this will obviously be necessary for your on-going orthodontic care.

## Wristbands

When you are in hospital it is essential to wear a wristband at all times to ensure your safety during your stay.

The wristband will contain accurate details about you on it including all of the essential information that staff need to identify you correctly and give you the right care. All hospital patients including babies, children and older people should wear the wristband at all times.

If you do not have a wristband whilst in hospital, please ask a member of staff for one. If it comes off or is uncomfortable, ask a member of staff to replace it.

## Smoking

Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is a smoke-free organisation. You are not permitted to smoke or use e-cigarettes in any of the hospital buildings or grounds.

If you need this information in another format or language, please ask a member of staff to arrange this for you.

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