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Exposure of Impacted Upper Canine



Patient information

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Exposure of Impacted Upper Canine

This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of your forthcoming treatment and has answers to many of the commonly asked questions. Please ask if you have any other questions would like further explanation please ask.

The problem

The canine normally erupts into the mouth between the ages of 11 and 13. One or both canines can develop in the wrong position, often lying across the roof of the mouth behind the front teeth.

Why do I need treatment?

It is necessary to help them to erupt into the mouth as part of your ongoing orthodontic treatment because the canine(s) are in the wrong place.

- If left alone the tooth will not erupt normally; may damage the roots of adjacent teeth; or push adjacent teeth out of position.

What does the treatment involve?

- A relatively minor surgical procedure which usually takes place under general anaesthetic but occasionally local anaesthetic if the tooth is positioned favourably
- The gum lying over the canine will be lifted with occasional removal of some of the bone surrounding the crown of the tooth

You may be admitted to Day Surgery to have the procedure done under a General Anaesthetic. If this is necessary, you should be able to go home the same day, once you have recovered from the anaesthetic. You will need to make arrangements for someone to collect you and be with you for 24 hours after discharge.

How will the orthodontist pull the tooth into the correct position?

Once the canine is exposed one of three things will happen under the same anaesthetic. What is going to happen for you will already have been discussed.

- **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 by attaching it to the fixed braced. 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 the surgery.
- **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
- **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 few weeks. You must be careful not to dislodge the pack. If this happens you should contact the department for advice.

- **Gum reposition.** 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?

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,
- For 24 hours avoid rinsing your mouth out vigorously as this may cause bleeding,
- You should clean your teeth normally, including those teeth next to the site of the biopsy,
- To prevent infection or food catching around the stitches, gently rinse three times a day with warm salt water (dissolve a teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water) commencing 24 hours after surgery,
- Eat soft foods that can be fork mash able. Cold things like ice cream can be soothing.

Are there things I should avoid?

- No activity that can increase heart rate such as heavy lifting or exercise for 24 hours after surgery,
- No alcohol or smoking for minimum three days after procedure,
- No rinsing for 24 hours after the procedure,
- Avoid touching the surgical area with tongue or fingers,
- Avoid hot drinks for 24 hours after the procedure.

Will I need another appointment?

You will need to return a few 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.

How to contact us

Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery

[Watford General Hospital](#)

Vicarage Road

Watford

Hertfordshire WD1 8HB

Monday to Friday, 9.00am – 5.00pm

Tel: 01923 217205

Hospital switchboard: 01923 244366 - Ext. 3855

After 5pm and at weekends

Northwick Park Hospital

Tel: 020 8864 3232

Ask for bleep number 900, ask for the Oral Surgery SHO on call

Taken from The British Association of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons website. www.baoms.org.uk

PALS

If you need this leaflet in another **language, large print, Braille or audio version**, please call **01923 217198** or email westherts.pals@nhs.net.



Language



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Survey - Friends and Family Test

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For more information, on our Patient Advice and Liaison Service, visit our [website](#).
Or type in: bit.ly/4o3QVFJ

Where can I park?

Car parking at Watford General Hospital is available in the [multi-storey car park](#). It's pay on exit, so you only pay for the time you need. You can pay by cash or card. The post code for the car park is **WD18 0LT**.

The external car park ticket machines on all sites **only accept cash**. However, you can pay by card via the [Saba parking app](#) (excluding AMEX), or search Saba parking app at the [App store](#) or [Google play](#).

Please note: due to current redevelopment works at St Albans, parking is very limited.

For more information about travelling to our sites and travel concessions, visit our [website](#).

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| Department | Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery |
| Ratified / review date | Aug 2025 / Aug 2028 |
| ID number | 38-2457-V1 |