



## Treatment of buried teeth

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Everyone should have 4 permanent canine teeth. The upper canines usually come through in the mouth between the ages of 11 and 13 years..



## What are buried teeth?

Sometimes either one or both of these teeth can develop in the wrong place or end up getting stuck or 'impacted' against the roots of teeth either side of it. This may damage the nearby teeth. Often the canine tooth can be impacted in the roof of the mouth (palate) behind the front teeth.

The canine tooth is an important tooth. If it is in a suitable position it can be brought into the line by orthodontic treatment (braces). This would involve exposing (uncovering) the tooth as well as orthodontic treatment, which may take approximately 2 ½ years to complete.

## What does the surgery involve?

This is a minor operation usually carried out under general anaesthetic- you will be asleep throughout the operation. Sometimes the operation is done under local anaesthetic (freezing the gum). The operation takes between 30-60 minutes. You will normally go home on the same day.

Once you are asleep or when the area is numb, the surgeon will remove a small piece of gum and bone to uncover the tooth. Once your tooth is uncovered there are 3 options. Your surgeon will discuss them with you.

## Bracket and Chain

An orthodontic bracket is glued to the tooth. Attached to it is a small length of gold chain, which can be secured to the gum with a stitch, or one of your teeth. Sometimes the gold chain dangles down, do not worry.

## Cover Plate (Brace)

To prevent the gum from growing back over the tooth, a simple removable brace may be made for you. Sometimes a gum dressing can be placed inside the brace. We will show you how to remove and replace the brace before you leave the hospital. It will stay in place for 7-10 days.

## Gauze Pack

Sometimes gauze dressing is stitched to the gum to help with healing. The wound is then closed with dissolving stitches. If you have a dressing, it needs to stay in place for 7-10 days. Care must be taken not to dislodge the pack. If this occurs please call the surgeon immediately. Your surgeon or orthodontist will remove it at our next appointment.

## What are the risks and side effects of the surgery?

- Bleeding in the first 1-24 hours - this is common but it should be minor.
- Discomfort- you should expect this for 2-3 days, which can be controlled with 'over the counter' medication.
- Infection (uncommon) - if this happens it will develop 2-5 days after the operation.
- Anaesthetic risks - serious problems caused by general anesthesia are very rare if you are healthy.

## What are the alternatives?

These may include:

- No orthodontic treatment - leaving the tooth in the position it is in
- Removal of the tooth if orthodontic treatment is not possible.

## How will I feel after the surgery?

Some areas of the mouth may be numb when you wake up. Most people have some soreness, which lasts for a few days. You may need to take some painkillers to help with this. Some people may have a small amount of bleeding and taste of blood in their mouth for a day or two. The area will feel swollen and you may have to eat soft food for a couple of days. After the surgery you must rest. The stitches will dissolve in 2-4 weeks.

## How do I look after my mouth?

Bracket and chain/gauze:  
Teeth should be cleaned as usual twice daily with a small-headed soft toothbrush. You should keep your mouth as clean as possible using either mouthwash (Corsodyl)

or warm salty mouthwash for one week. This should NOT be done on the day of the surgery.

Cover plate (brace):

If you are given a cover plate to wear you should not take it out for 48 hours. After 48 hours remove it and clean it with a toothbrush. The cover plate should from now on be cleaned twice a day. The rest of your teeth should be cleaned with a small headed soft toothbrush twice a day. Please use a mouthwash such as Chlorhexidine or warm salty mouthwash for a week.

## What happens next?

Please continue seeing your orthodontist so that they can continue with aligning the tooth, or teeth.

## What if there is an emergency?

If you have any emergencies to do with the surgery then please contact your surgeon ASAP.

However if there are any issues with your orthodontic brace then call the Practice ASAP.

**Follow-up: After 7-14 days your orthodontist will review you and an appointment will be made some weeks later to start your treatment.**

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