



Mouth-sinus communications: lessening the risks

This leaflet has been provided to improve your understanding of this condition and how you can lessen the risk of it occurring. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer, or would like further explanation, please ask.

What is a mouth-sinus communication?

If you have had an upper pre-molar or molar tooth removed, there is a small risk that a hole between the tooth cavity and the sinus may develop (known as a 'communication'). This may be because the root of the extracted tooth was long and/or the bone between your mouth and sinus is fragile.

You may not be aware of the hole for several weeks (it can develop as late as 4-6 weeks after the tooth is taken out). You may notice a discharge of fluid from your nose after drinking, possible discharge of pus from your nose, acute and chronic sinusitis, and a foul taste in the mouth and smell in the nose.

To lessen the risk of developing this hole, we recommend the following:

- ✗ **Don't smoke.** This slows the healing of the tooth socket and makes you more likely to develop an infection in the socket, thus increasing the risk of developing a hole.
- ✗ **Don't blow your nose.** This increases the pressure inside the sinus and increases the risk of developing a hole.
- ✗ **Don't travel by air over the next 4-6 weeks.** The aeroplane cabin is pressurised and can put pressure inside the sinus.
- ✓ **Do use nasal decongestants.** Decongestants such as *Ephedrine* nasal drops, *Oxymetazoline* and *Xylometazoline* reduce the degree of swelling of the nasal lining and lessen the likelihood of sneezing.
- ✓ **Do use steam inhalations.** Inhale steam over a bowl of very hot water with a few drops of *Karvol* or *Olbas oil*.
- ✓ **Do use an antiseptic mouthwash.** Antiseptic mouthwashes such as *Corsodyl* lessen the likelihood of infection and speeds healing.
- ✓ **Keep your mouth open when you sneeze.** This lowers the pressure inside the sinus and lessens the likelihood of raised pressure creating a hole.
- ✓ **If you have been prescribed antibiotics, remember to take the whole course.**

Contacting us

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To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT Department of Oral & Maxillofacial Surgery, May 2026

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