

Mouth-sinus communications: how to lessen the risks

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.
- ✓ Sneeze with your mouth open. 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.

Contact us

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Further information

More information is available on the Trust website www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

This document can be made available in other languages and formats upon request.

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