

DRY SOCKET

A Dry Socket is a complication of wound healing following the extraction of a tooth.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *What causes a dry socket?*

- It occurs due to the loss of the blood clot and subsequent exposure of the underlying bone.

2. *What are the symptoms of a dry socket?*

- After the extraction healing seems to initially be progressing well with gradual reduction of pain.
- However, anytime from a few days to a week after the extraction the associated pain which was decreasing starts to get worse.
- The pain which may be severe and throbbing can radiate through the jaw and up to the ear.
- There is a bad taste or odour in the mouth.
- There may be difficulty with opening the mouth.

3. *What are the risks associated with a dry socket?*

- The use of tobacco products: either by smoking, chewing or vaping.
- Females, especially those using oral contraceptives. High estrogen levels associated with the contraceptives may disrupt the normal healing process.
- Poor oral hygiene.
- A previous history of a dry socket.
- A current or history of previous infections associated with the tooth to be extracted.
- Failure to follow the dentist's post-operative instructions.

4. *Where is a dry socket most likely to occur?*

- The most common area is a wisdom tooth removal in the lower jaw.
- However, a dry socket can occur after any tooth extraction.

5. *What is the treatment for a dry socket?*

- A dry socket may last up to 7-10 days and then gradually get better.
- There is no universally accepted treatment.
- As a dry socket is not an infection, antibiotics aren't indicated.
- Having the site cleaned and the placement of a medicated dressing may help.