



Dr. Ciara Mulvihill, Specialist Oral Surgeon
B.Dent.Sc, MJDF (RCS Eng), PGCert (TLHE), FFD RCSI (OSOM), D.Ch.Dent
(Oral Surgery)

“ABOUT CANINE TEETH”
Information for patients

What are eye teeth/canine teeth?

Eye teeth are permanent canine teeth, particularly the upper ones. They are the third tooth back from the mid-line on each side of the jaws. They are the last of the front teeth to come down.

Why do eye teeth sometimes not come down?

They follow a long path during development. They are the last of the front teeth to come down and sometimes the space may be lost.

Does it matter if my eye teeth do not come down?

Not necessarily. This depends on the particular circumstances. Many eye teeth remain buried and do not cause any trouble

Must all impacted eye- teeth be removed?

No! There are several options. These are outlined below.

What treatment options are available?

- 1: removal of the unerupted eye-tooth;
- 2: removal and reimplantation of the eye tooth;
- 3: exposure and orthodontic traction to bring the canine down;
- 4: leaving the eye-tooth in place with regular periodic radiographic (x-ray) monitoring.

Are these options all equally applicable to me?

No, some of the options may not apply in your particular case and you should discuss this further with the dentists (oral surgeon and orthodontist) who are looking after you. A reimplantation is rarely an option.

Operations on the eye-tooth

What is involved in the removal of the eye tooth?

This is an operation, which may be carried out under local anaesthetic, local anaesthetic and sedation (in over 16-year-old patients) or general anaesthetic. The type of anaesthesia selected depends on the difficulty of the particular procedure and the age and maturity of the patient.

Are there any unwanted effects of the procedure?



There are side effects, which accompany every procedure and complications, which are rare. The side effects include swelling, soreness and bleeding, although this is usually slight. The complications include loss of the deciduous eye-tooth (baby tooth) and damage to the front teeth.

Is damage to the front teeth serious?

It may involve a temporary loosening of the front teeth. It may also result in loss of vitality of the front teeth with subsequent darkening of the teeth, necessitating root treatment initially and crowning in the long term. Very occasionally it may involve loss of the front teeth but this is rare.

What is involved in the exposure of the eye tooth?

This operation is designed to help the eye-tooth to come down or to be brought down by the orthodontist. It involves removing some of the covering palate or gum and bone to eliminate any obstruction. Usually, a surgical dressing or pack is placed over the exposed tooth and is held in place by a stitch. The orthodontist usually removes the stitch and pack within ten to fourteen days (10 – 14).

Are there any side effects?

These are similar to those involved in the removal of the eye tooth but are less common and less severe.

I confirm that I have read this information sheet and have been shown my (my child's) X-ray which has been explained to me.

Patient's Signature: _____

Date:

Witness's Signature: _____

Date:

The decision to proceed with the removal of your canine tooth (or teeth) can only be made by you. You may discuss it with your family or friends.

You do not have to make up your mind immediately.