

Abscess Drainage

MF17 Lite - Expires end of February 2026



This fact sheet is for general information about this procedure only. It is not intended to be used as medical advice or to replace advice that your relevant healthcare professional would give you. If you have a particular medical problem, please consult a healthcare professional.

© EIDO Systems International Limited. The operation and treatment information in this document is published under license from EIDO Systems International and is protected by copyright laws. Other than for your personal, non-commercial use, you may not copy, print out, download or otherwise reproduce any of the information.

eidohealthcare.com



What is an abscess?

An abscess is a build-up of pus surrounded by normal tissue. An abscess can form in your gum when a damaged tooth becomes infected.

What are the benefits?

Draining the abscess will speed up your recovery and reduce your risk of becoming more unwell.

Are there any alternatives?

Antibiotics may help to treat an infection but they are unlikely to stop it on their own.

What will happen if I decide not to have the procedure?

An abscess will get larger and more painful with time. Eventually it will burst and the pus will drain out.

If the abscess is not drained properly, the infection may not go away and the abscess could come back.

If the abscess is not treated, the infection may get into your bloodstream and cause blood poisoning (septicaemia).

What complications can happen?

The healthcare team are trained to reduce the risk of complications.

Possible complications of this procedure are shown below.

Any risk rates given are taken from studies of people who have had this procedure. Your doctor may be able to tell you if the risk of a complication is higher or lower for you. Some risks are higher if you are older, obese, have other health problems or you smoke. Health problems include diabetes, heart disease or lung disease.

Some complications can be serious and may even cause death.

General complications of any procedure

- Bleeding after the procedure.
- Infection.

- Allergic reaction to the equipment, materials or medication.
- Venous thromboembolism (VTE). This is a blood clot in your leg (deep-vein thrombosis, or DVT) or one that has moved to your lung (pulmonary embolus).
- Chest infection. Your risk is lower if you have stopped smoking and you have not had a recent cough or cold.

Specific complications of this procedure

- Swelling or bruising around the area that was drained.
- Damage to the nerves that give feeling to the gum or skin.
- Damage to the nerves that supply your face muscles.
- Need for further treatment. Although the abscess has been drained, you may need more treatment for the infection.

Consequences of this procedure

- Pain.
- Scarring of your skin, if you had extraoral drainage.

Keep this information document. Use it to help you if you need to talk to the healthcare team.

Some information, such as risk and complication statistics, is taken from global studies and/or databases. Please ask your surgeon or doctor for more information about the risks that are specific to you, and they may be able to tell you about any other suitable treatments options.

This document is intended for information purposes only and should not replace advice that your relevant healthcare team would give you.

Authors

Bridie Griffiths (BDS, MFDS, PGDip Med Ed, MORal Surg)

Sarah Ali (BDS MFDS PGCert MedEd, PGDip ConSed, RCPSG MORal Surg)

Reviewers

Kelly Gillan (BChD, MFDS RCPS)

Rhian Jones (BDS MFDSRCS MSurgDent(Eng) PGCert)