



Managing Toothache During Self-Isolation

The team at the practice is available as an emergency telephone contact during regular hours, but we recommend everyone, especially those over 70, pregnant, and/or with underlying health conditions, follow strict social distancing or isolating measures.

It is unclear at this stage when our normal service will resume. Below are a few things you can try to help manage any dental pain you experience, until you are able to see us.

If you have swelling on your face or difficulty swallowing or breathing, this requires urgent medical attention, so do not hesitate to contact us or the emergency services (NHS 111), for advice.

Pain from Teeth

If a tooth is acutely sensitive to temperature, antibiotics will not fix this. The source of infection, usually decay, needs to be removed to allow the tooth to heal. If bacteria have caused irreversible damage to the nerve in the tooth, either tooth removal or a root filling is required.

Here are a few things you can do to help reduce dental pain:

- If there is a cavity in the tooth, a temporary filling material can be packed into this space. These temporary filling kits are available from most supermarkets or pharmacies.
- Anti-inflammatory tablets (NSAIDs), can reduce pain. A combination of ibuprofen and paracetamol has been found to be beneficial if you can take them both. However, there are some reports that [ibuprofen may increase the symptoms of COVID-19](#). Therefore, paracetamol alone is probably best if you are experiencing any symptoms. Please make sure you do not exceed the recommended dosage.
- Regularly using desensitising toothpaste, such as Sensodyne Repair and Protect or Colgate Sensitive Pro Relief, can help.
- Anaesthetic gel, such as Orajel, applied to the area can aid in numbing pain.
- Clove Oil - this essential oil can be found in health food stores and you can apply it onto the painful tooth with a cotton bud. This works well if there is an exposed nerve due to a deep decay.
- Keep your head elevated at night-time - When you lie down to sleep, the change in blood pressure can increase pain. An extra pillow at night-time can help to avoid this.

Keep the area cold- reducing blood flow to an area will reduce inflammation and pain. Be careful to not apply ice directly to a tooth as this can increase pain.

If there is an infection, a swelling next to the tooth or pus discharging from the area;

- Rinse your mouth with warm salt water or mouthwash to try and draw out the infection. Dissolve a spoonful of salt in warm water and rinse around your mouth, or hold it in your mouth next to the infected area. Repeat several times.
- Never put heat externally on your face as this can draw the infection into the surrounding tissues, causing external swelling.

Pain from Gums

If there is bacteria or food debris trapped between the gum and the tooth, this can cause pain.

- Gently clean the area with interdental aids such as floss, tepe brushes or an interspace brush. You could put Corsodyl gel onto the brush to help clean the area and promote healing.
- Rinse thoroughly with warm salt water or Corsodyl mouthwash. (Note: Corsodyl will stain your teeth so we don't recommend this for long-term use).

Pain from Ulcers

Mouth ulcers can sometimes be a sign of underlying medical conditions such as an iron deficiency. Most are caused by trauma and usually heal within 7-10 days. Any mouth ulcer which doesn't heal in two weeks should be checked by a dentist. To reduce discomfort, you can:

- Rinse with warm salt water and keep the area clean
- Avoid citrus fruits, spicy and sharp foods
- Try a topical anaesthetic gel such as Orajel or Difflam Spray
- Or to help with healing of ulcers, Gengigel can be effective as well as soothing the pain.

Broken Teeth

If a tooth or filling has broken, it can cause sensitivity from the tooth being exposed, or pain to your tongue, cheek or lip from sharp edges.

This sensitivity can be reduced by rubbing a desensitising toothpaste, such as Sensodyne, onto the tooth, or taking pain relief if required.

You could also try placing a temporary filling material over the broken part until a more definitive filling can be placed by your dentist. These kits can be bought from supermarkets or pharmacies.

Contact Us

If you have any symptoms of an acute infection such as facial swelling, trouble breathing, difficulty swallowing, or the swelling causes your eyes to close, this requires urgent medical attention.

Please do not be afraid to contact us or the emergency services (NHS 111), for advice.