



Patient Information Leaflet

Oro-Antral Communication

Cork University Dental
School & Hospital



This leaflet has been designed to explain an oro-antral communication and it contains answers to many frequently asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer, or if you would like further information, please ask us.

What is an oro-antral communication (OAC)?

An oro-antral communication is where there is an opening from your mouth into your sinus. Your sinus is a cavity above your upper teeth and beside your nose – the one that gets blocked up when you have a cold.

How is an OAC created?

Sometimes the roots of your upper back teeth are inside the sinus or very close to it. Removing these teeth can create an opening from your mouth into your sinus.

What happens when I have an OAC?

You are likely to develop infection in your sinus. You may have difficulty drinking – sometimes liquids come down your nose when you try to swallow. You may not be able to smoke or drink through a straw because you cannot form a seal inside your mouth.

How is an OAC repaired?

The most common method of repairing an OAC is to re-position a part of your gum over the opening and stitch it in place. This seals the opening and allows it to heal.

What sort of appointment will I need?

There are usually three options – depending on how difficult the procedure will be. These appointment options are:

- 1. Local Anaesthetic** – an injection into your gum to make the area completely numb - just as you would have for a filling with your own dentist. This is by far the most common method and suitable for almost all patients.
- 2. Local Anaesthetic with Sedation** – an injection into your arm or a gas to breathe to help you feel more relaxed during treatment.
- 3. General Anaesthetic** – you are put to sleep completely in a hospital theatre. This is the least common method and is generally only used for a very large opening.

What should I expect afterwards?

- Some slight **bleeding** is normal for a day or so - this is usually easily controlled with pressure over the area.
- Some **pain** is normal - your dentist will advise you about painkillers to use and give you a prescription if necessary.
- Some **swelling** and **bruising** is normal but the amount varies a lot from one patient to another.
- Swelling will be at its worst on the second day and most swelling should have disappeared within a week or two. With swelling you may also have some difficulty opening your mouth wide but this also generally returns to normal within a week or two.
- Any **stitches** you have will fall out by themselves in about 10 - 14 days.
- You may need to take **time off** – your dentist will advise you about this.

Is there anything special I need to do afterwards?

After an OAF is repaired there are some special instructions for you to follow:

- do not blow your nose for ten days as this puts pressure on the repair from inside your sinus
- if you sneeze then open your mouth to allow the force of the sneeze to come out through your mouth rather than your nose
- do not drink through a straw or smoke for ten days as this creates a vacuum inside your mouth and puts pressure on the repair
- you will be given a prescription for medication to reduce inflammation and infection in your sinus and you should take this, and your other medications, exactly as directed

YOU SHOULD AVOID SMOKING FOR SEVERAL DAYS.

Smoking interferes with healing and may promote infection.

A second leaflet which accompanies this one will give you general advice on what to do after you have had surgery in your mouth.

If you have any problems you can contact the clinic where the surgery was done.

Oral Surgery Department of Cork Dental School and Hospital at (021) 4545100.

**After 5pm there is an on-call dentist at the
Emergency Department of Cork University Hospital, (021) 4546400.**

This leaflet is available online at <http://www.ucc.ie/en/dentalschool/patients>