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You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the advice you have been given by your GP, consultant, or another healthcare professional, you may ask for a second (or further) opinion.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk if you would like a reference list.

Name: Catherine Witherington
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Surgical exposure of a tooth

This leaflet is designed to improve your understanding of your planned treatment and contains answers to commonly asked questions. If you need any further explanation please ask us when you are in clinic.

Why do I need surgery?

The canine (eye tooth) breaks through the gum between the age of 11 and 13. Sometimes one or both canines develop in the wrong position. They often lie across the roof of the mouth behind the front teeth, and less commonly they can be next to the lip or cheek. You may need to have an X-ray or a CT scan to find the exact position of the teeth. If left alone the tooth will not come through and may damage the roots of the front teeth or push them out of position. There is also a risk of a cyst developing or infection.

What happens during the operation?

Uncovering the tooth to help it come through is usually done under a general anaesthetic (you are asleep) and you should be able to go home the same day. While you are asleep the gum lying over the canine will be pushed back; some of the bone surrounding the tooth may also need to be removed. A small bracket is then glued to the tooth. Attached to this is a gold chain which the orthodontist will then use to pull the tooth into the correct position. The chain may be held out of the way by a stitch. The gum will be put back and you may have some stitches, which are usually dissolvable and can take up to 2 weeks to disappear.

Is there much pain or swelling?

The operation is not particularly painful but you will have some soreness. Usually painkillers such as paracetamol or ibuprofen will be enough to keep you comfortable. Make sure you follow the instructions on the packet carefully.

There is usually very little in the way of swelling. Keeping the area clean with gentle tooth brushing and rinsing with warm salty water after meals for about a week will help with healing.

Will I need another appointment?

Your next appointment will be with your orthodontist about 8 weeks after the operation. However if you have any problems or any concerns then please contact the ORAL SURGERY DEPARTMENT 8am - 5pm Mon to Fri 01722 336262 ext 3255.

Oral Surgery Department
 **01722 336262 ext 3255.**