



Incision and Drainage of an Abscess

► **Please read this handout before reading and signing the consent form.**

This handout explains the procedure of having an abscess drained, including risks, benefits, and alternatives. This material is in addition to the discussions you have with your doctors. It is important that you fully understand this information, so please read this handout thoroughly.

About the Procedure

To drain an abscess, the area is numbed with a local anesthesia and an incision is made so the pus can drain. The area may take several days to heal. Most of the time, antibiotics are prescribed. Sometimes an abscess is drained at the same time a tooth is removed.

Benefits

You might receive the benefits listed below from this procedure. The general chance of having these results happen is about 90%. Doctors cannot guarantee that you will receive any of these benefits. Only you can decide if the benefits are worth the risks. Benefits may include:

- Decreased pressure, swelling, and pain.
- Removal of large amounts of bacteria and pus.
- Stopping or slowing the spread of infection.
- Helping the antibiotics to work better.

What are the possible risks and complications from this procedure?

Before you have this procedure, you need to understand the associated risks. No procedure is completely risk-free. These risks are well-recognized, but there may also be risks not included in this list that are unforeseen by your doctors. Risks may include:

- General risks, which apply to all types of surgery and to procedures where a blood vessel, body cavity, or other internal tissue is entered with a needle, tube, or similar device. Such procedures are called *invasive* procedures. These risks, which can be serious and even life-threatening, include bleeding, infection, and damage to surrounding tissues, vessels, nerves, or organs.

Questions?

Call 206-598-4277

Your questions are important. Call your doctor or health care provider if you have questions or concerns. UWMC Clinic staff are also available to help at any time.

Dental Clinic:
206-598-4277

Risks specific to this procedure include:

- Pain.
- Bleeding.
- Bruising.
- Nerve damage (causing temporary or, rarely, permanent numbness).
- It may be difficult to numb the incision area.
- Infection may become worse, possibly life-threatening.
- Tooth and bone may be lost.
- Scarring.
- Possible side effects from medicines including allergic reactions, upset stomach/nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and/or fungal infection.

What are the alternatives to this procedure?

You may decide not to have this procedure. Besides doing nothing, the alternative treatments are:

- Extraction of the tooth and trying to get drainage from the socket.
- Antibiotics only.
- Other choices for anesthesia/sedation such as oral or nitrous oxide/oxygen sedation, and possibly IV sedation.

There are risks and benefits to these treatment alternatives. Please discuss the details with your doctor. Risks may include:

- Complications from the extraction.
- Not able to get enough drainage from the socket.
- Inability to control the infection.

What follow-up care is needed?

It is critical that we make sure your infection goes away. Be sure to:

- Take your antibiotic as prescribed. Use it all up, even if you feel like the infection is gone.
- Return to our clinic as instructed by your doctor to check and, when ready, to remove the drain.
- Leave the drain alone. It will do its job best if not bothered.
- If your tooth is saved, a root canal must be done within 1 to 2 weeks, or you risk re-infection.

If you have any questions about this procedure or the risks, benefits, or alternatives to this procedure, talk to your doctor before signing any consent forms.

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