Option 4: transplant the buried tooth into its correct position

Your surgeon will remove the buried canine and transplant it to the correct space.

This is an unusual choice of treatment these days as it has a lower success rate than the other options. The life expectancy of transplanted teeth is significantly less than for teeth moved orthodontically.

Useful contacts

Orthodontic departments, open Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm:

Chase Farm Hospital: 020 8375 2235
Barnet Hospital: 020 8216 4266
Edgware Hospital: 020 3758 2408

Further information

For more information about the maxillofacial and orthodontic service at the Royal Free London, visit our website at: royalfree.nhs.uk/services/services-a-z/maxillofacial-and-orthodontics

British Society of Orthodontics:
www.bos.org.uk

British Dental Health Foundation:
www.dentalhealth.org

This leaflet is also available in large print. If you need it in another format please ask a member of staff.

For a full list of references for this leaflet please contact: rf.communications@nhs.net.

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You have four permanent canines, which come through from ages 11-13. Canines can become buried in the jaw bone and develop in an abnormal position, either because there is not enough space in the mouth, or because the tooth has grown in the wrong position.

Treatment options
There are various treatment options.

A member of the orthodontic team will be on hand to help you decide which option is best for you.

Option 1: leave and monitor
You can leave the impacted tooth where it is if it is not causing any problems. Your dentist can monitor its position regularly using x-rays.

However, if left, the buried canine can damage the roots of the adjacent teeth or a cyst can develop around it. The canine can also move position as you age.

Option 2: exposing and moving the buried tooth
Your surgeon will find the buried tooth under the gum and cement a small gold chain to it.

Later your orthodontist will attach the other end of the chain to your fixed braces. This will move the tooth into the correct space.

This treatment can take more than three years.

Immediately after surgery you are likely to experience some pain and bleeding. It is also common for patients to experience swelling, which can last up to seven days.

Some patients may experience complications, such as the gold chain falling off and needing to be glued back on. In rare cases the procedure can cause damage to the surrounding teeth.

Your surgeon will go through all the associated risks with you beforehand.

Option 3: remove the buried tooth
You may decide to have an operation to remove the impacted canine.

This may be suitable for you if:

- you do not want to wear fixed braces
- the rest of your teeth are straight with no gaps
- the buried tooth is causing problems.

If the milk canine is eventually lost, you may require a replacement tooth in the long term which would need to be self-funded.

Up to 3% of the population will have an impacted canine. Of these, 85% are positioned within the palate.