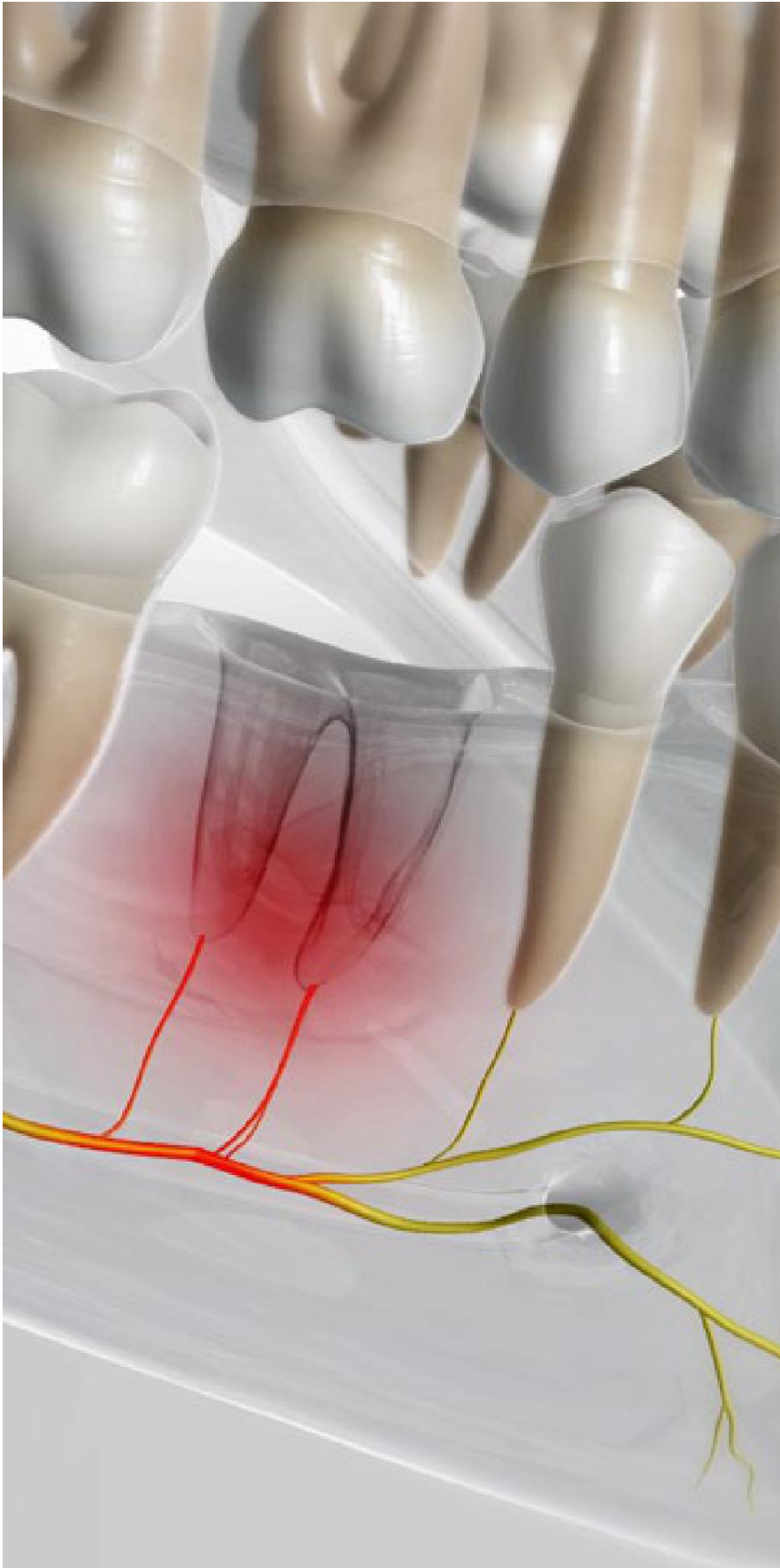




Dry Socket



Overview

This is a problem that can happen after a permanent tooth is removed. Normally, when you have a tooth removed, a blood clot forms in the empty socket. This blood clot protects the underlying bone and nerves. But if a clot doesn't form, or if it forms but then dissolves or becomes dislodged, the nerves are exposed. This is a "dry socket." It can be very painful.

Causes

We don't always know what causes a dry socket to form. Drinking hot beverages or eating solid foods can dislodge a clot. So can sucking on a straw. You can dislodge a clot if you're very active while healing. Tobacco use can increase your risk for a dry socket. So can birth control pills.

Symptoms

Symptoms include severe pain that may radiate to your ear, eye, head and neck. The socket may look empty, and you may be able to see bone deep within it. You may have a bad taste in your mouth, and bad breath.

Treatment

Dry socket is treated with a medicated dressing, and with medicine to control your pain. If you have a dry socket, contact your dentist or oral surgeon immediately.