



Tooth Abscess: Dentistry: listening and vocabulary answer key

A

1c 2j 3e 4g 5h 6a 7i 8b 9d 10f

B

1. he has a bad toothache
2. red and swollen gums, bad taste in the mouth, high temperature
3. takes a complete medical history
4. drain the pus, remove dead tissue and do root canal therapy

C

1e 2g 3a 4h 5b 6d 7f 8c

Transcript

Dentist: Hi, how can I help today?

Patient: I had an accident a few days ago and I've now got a really bad toothache. It's the worst toothache I've ever had.

Dentist: Oh, that's no good. Can you tell me a bit more about the accident? What happened exactly?

Patient: I was at a concert last Friday night, it was really crowded. I was in the line waiting for my ticket and there was a lot of pushing from people behind. I was pushed against a wall and I hit my mouth on a wall. Like I said, I've had bad toothache since then, for three days now.

Dentist: Right, I see. What about other symptoms apart from the toothache? Do you have any other problems?

Patient: Yes, my gums are swollen and really tender. It's so painful that I haven't wanted to eat anything and anyway I've got this horrible taste in my mouth. It's really disgusting.

Dentist: OK. How do you feel in yourself otherwise?

Patient: I don't feel well at all. I took my temperature and it's quite high. It was 37.9 degrees all day yesterday. I've tried to manage the toothache at home but I just don't know what to do now. It's getting worse and more and more painful.

Dentist: Well, you did the right thing coming in as soon as possible. If you had left it, the tooth abscess may have spread to the other teeth or even to other parts of your face.

Patient: My gums are a bit red and swollen but I didn't think it was an abscess.

Dentist: Yes, it's an abscess in the dental pulp, or centre of the tooth. Sometimes an injury to the mouth causes the nerve in the affected tooth to die. Once the centre of your tooth has dead tissue in it, an infection in the nerve pulp can develop more easily. A tooth abscess is a collection of pus or infected material. Your high temperature seems to indicate that you have an infection.

Patient: Well, I've never had anything like it before. I can't stand much more pain.

Dentist: Sure. I understand what you're saying. Before I explain the treatment, I need to ask a few questions about your medical history if that's OK?



Patient: Yeah, no problem.

Dentist: OK. Firstly, are you a diabetic?

Patient: No, I'm not.

Dentist: Do you have AIDS? Or are you HIV positive?

Patient: No.

Dentist: Do you have a low immune system, I mean because of chemotherapy or similar therapies?

Patient: No. I'm usually quite healthy.

Dentist: Great. Just one more question. Are you taking any kinds of steroids at the moment?

Patient: No. The last time I had steroid medication was in a steroid cream but that was last year.

Dentist: All right. Thanks for giving me that information. I'll explain what I'll do to treat the abscess now. The first thing I'll do is to drain pus from inside the tooth through a small hole. Then, I'll remove the dead nerve tissue from the centre of the tooth. And finally I'll do root canal therapy. Root canal therapy just means filling the space in the centre of the tooth after the dead nerve has been taken out. It's important to do that to prevent further infection.

Patient: What about aftercare? What do I have to do when I go home?

Dentist: Use a mouthwash a few times a day while your mouth is tender. I would suggest that you eat soft food for a few days. And drink plenty of water. Avoid hot drinks for a few days too.

Patient: What about antibiotics?

Dentist: You shouldn't need antibiotics after the pus has been drained. However, you must advise me immediately if your high temperature persists. Take your temperature twice a day to keep an eye on things. If you still have a high temperature, you may need antibiotics.

Patient: Will I still need to take strong pain killers?

Dentist: No, it shouldn't be necessary after the abscess has been drained. Two paracetamol four times a day should control the pain.

Patient: I hope so. What if it doesn't control the pain?

Dentist: Call my surgery and I'll prescribe something stronger for you. But, as I say, it's usually enough once the abscess has been drained. OK, before I start, I'll get you to sign this consent form.