

# Dental abscess

(also termed a dentoalveolar [abscess](#), tooth abscess or root abscess), is a localized collection of [pus](#) associated with a tooth. The most common type of dental abscess is a periapical abscess, and the second most common is a periodontal abscess. In a periapical abscess, usually the origin is a [bacterial infection](#) that has accumulated in the soft, often dead, pulp of the tooth. This can be caused by tooth decay, broken teeth or extensive periodontal disease (or combinations of these factors). A failed root canal treatment may also create a similar abscess.

A dental abscess is a type of odontogenic [infection](#), although commonly the latter term is applied to an infection which has spread outside the local region around the causative tooth.

Dental abscesses and facial cellulitis put dentists on alert for potentially life-threatening conditions such as [sepsis](#) or airway obstruction, but the risk of a [brain abscess](#) is a complication of odontogenic infection that dentists rarely consider.

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A 8-year-old girl who was previously healthy and presented with unresponsiveness on a background of fever that resolved within 2 days of onset. History was significant for recurrent dental abscesses requiring drainage. Imaging revealed what was unexpected: a brain overloaded with multiple space-occupying lesions and diffuse oedema. The patient was started on mannitol and dexamethasone in addition to antimicrobials. Her condition improved dramatically within few days. Multiple aspiration procedures were performed later and she recovered fully with minor deficits <sup>1)</sup>.

<sup>1)</sup>

AlHarmi RA, Henari DF, Jadah RHS, AlKhayyat HM. A brain populated with space-occupying lesions: identifying the culprit. BMJ Case Rep. 2018 Apr 24;2018. pii: bcr-2018-224286. doi: 10.1136/bcr-2018-224286. PubMed PMID: 29691273.

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