

## THE DENTIST

*The links in these documents contain information to make your life in Hokkaido easier and more enjoyable. Access each link and add it to your favourites list.*

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One of the pieces of advice that stuck in my mind after attending orientation in my home country was: make sure you get your teeth checked BEFORE you go to Japan. I was told many horror stories - no doubt you've heard some yourself. But what are you meant to do when something just pops up, such as your wisdom teeth? Take a trip home? Never fear, you need not take such drastic measures.

I was unlucky enough to get what I thought was an infected wisdom tooth just weeks after a visit home at Christmas. I thought I was doomed. Living in *inaka*, my dentist didn't speak a word of English. What began as a nightmare, I can honestly say, turned out to be quite a pleasurable experience. The lovely dentist used a *Dentist Dictionary* to explain my symptoms, and he gave me some really awesome drugs for my pain! Not only that, what I thought was an infected wisdom tooth, turned out to be just inflamed.

*I even exchanged phone numbers with the dental nurse!*

On top of that, with my health insurance, it cost next to nothing, like 1200円! And yes, I made sure he was wearing NEW surgical gloves and used sterilized equipment before he came within a meter of me.

Just some words of advice:

- Try and get a Japanese friend to refer you to a decent dentist.
- Don't put treatment off, especially if it is a cavity, it will only get worse.
- If you weren't already aware, Japanese toothpaste and tap water, don't contain fluoride so if needed, get some toothpaste sent from home, or you can buy some foreign brands in the larger cities. Also, you can get fluoride tablets sent from home.

- If you are taking a visit home or to a western country, schedule a check-up.
- No Nihongo? Either the dentist will be able to speak some English (university educated), or will have a Japanese/English dictionary with technical jargon in it. If worried, take along a Japanese friend, or your dictionary.

Don't forget to take your health insurance card along!

As always, the official [hajat/forum](#) is where you will find all the answers to any questions you may have regarding life in Hokkaido.

*HAJET kindly asks you to use paper wisely and only print this document if you really, really must. LOVE HOKKAIDO, LOVE NATURE!*

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## USEFUL RESOURCES

JNTO  
Japan Visitor  
Go Japan

[www.jnto.go.jp](http://www.jnto.go.jp)  
[www.japanvisitor.com](http://www.japanvisitor.com)  
[www.gojapan.about.com](http://www.gojapan.about.com)

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