

WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

Wisdom teeth: (also known as “third molars”)

These will usually not push through the gum until late teens early twenties, sometimes older. Often there is very little space for the wisdom teeth to fit in the mouth. If there is not enough space the wisdom teeth will become wedged in “impacted”.

Some impacted wisdom teeth may cause no problems; however other impacted teeth can cause severe problems.

Wisdom teeth can cause the following problems:

Infection: When an impacted wisdom tooth starts to push through the gum, an infection can start around the top of the tooth. Infection and inflammation (swollen, red gum) can cause pain, swelling and jaw stiffness. Swallowing may become painful. The person may feel generally unwell. The infection can cause bad breath and an unpleasant taste.

Pain: Pressure from the wisdom tooth may cause pain in the tooth next to it. Pain can also be caused by infection around the wisdom tooth.

Crowding: A wisdom tooth may push nearby teeth out of their correct position and may help cause crowding of front teeth.

Cysts: If a wisdom tooth is not removed, a sac of fluid called a cyst can form around the tooth and may displace the tooth. The cyst can destroy bone and damage other teeth and the gums.

Damage to nearby molars: An impacted wisdom tooth may keep pushing against the molar next to it. This can cause an “erosion cavity” where the wisdom tooth hits the other molar. This often leads to serious damage to both teeth. The molars may become infected or “abscessed”. Removal of both molars is occasionally needed.

Ulcer: An upper wisdom tooth may push sideways out of the gum. It may cause an ulcer where it rubs against the inside of the cheek.

A food trap: Food becomes trapped between the wisdom tooth and the molar next to it. This can cause cavities in both teeth.

Removal of Wisdom Teeth:

Your Dentist will advise you whether your wisdom teeth need to be removed or not, and whether to have the wisdom teeth removed in our dental office or in a day-surgery. Your Dentist will need to take x-ray films of your jaw. This film will help your dentist plan the best way to remove the wisdom teeth and to diagnose the degree of impaction.

Removal of wisdom teeth: Your dentist may have to make an incision to open your gums to remove the wisdom tooth. A small portion of the bone may have to be removed so your dentist can get to the tooth. The tooth may have to be divided into segments so it can be removed easily and safely. The incision in your

gums may have to be closed with stitches. These stitches will dissolve after a few days.

Possible side effects of the surgery: All types of surgery have risks. Removal of wisdom teeth also have risks. Complications can occur. The following list is not complete but is intended to inform you about possible problems. They do not happen often but may occur. There may be other uncommon complications. If you have any concerns about possible risks or complications, always ask your dentist. **Numbness or altered sensation,** An impacted wisdom tooth may be close to nerves, sometimes the tooth may be touching the nerve. When the tooth is removed the nerve may be bruised which can cause numbness, tingling and loss of feeling in teeth, gums, cheeks, lips, chin, tongue and around the upper jaw and the lower jaw. This injured nerve will usually heal within four weeks, but for some it can take six to eighteen months. In rare cases the numbness is permanent. **Dry socket,** after a tooth is removed a blood clot forms in the socket, which is important for the healing process. If this blood clot is washed away you can get a dry socket which is very painful. If this occurs see us immediately. **Infections,** if an infection forms it can be easily treated with antibiotics. **Difficulty in opening the mouth,** pain when opening the mouth is common, this will go after a few days. **Fever,** the body temperature may be slightly higher after surgery, it should return to normal after 12/24 hours. If the fever lasts longer it could be an indication of an infection or other problem, return to your dentist immediately. **Excessive bleeding,** although rare, hemorrhage may occur, it may be caused by too much exertion. It can be stopped by applying a gauze and pressure. Lip sores, damage to nearby teeth or fillings, vomiting sinus problems and weak jaws may also be problems. If you have any problems after wisdom teeth removal contact us immediately.

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WISDOM TEETH