



ABOUT YOUR WISDOM TEETH

A Guide to Understanding
Your Treatment Options

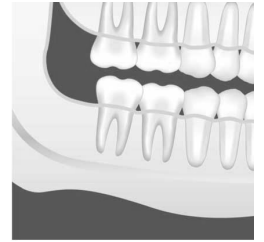


What are Wisdom Teeth?

Wisdom teeth, officially referred to as third molars, are usually the last teeth to develop and are located in the back part of your mouth. They usually complete development between the ages of 15 and 20, a time traditionally associated with the onset of maturity and the attainment of Wisdom.

What Are Impacted Wisdom Teeth?

Since the wisdom teeth are the last to develop, they usually do not have enough room to adequately erupt into the mouth and become fully functional and cleansible. This lack of room or space can result in a number of harmful effects on your overall dental and medical health. When this occurs, they are said to be impacted, indicating their inability to erupt into a position, which will allow them to function in the chewing process. A special x-ray of your mouth and jaws will be taken to determine if your wisdom teeth are impacted.



Healing After Teeth Removal

There are Several Types of Impactions:

Soft Tissue Impactions: There is not enough room to allow the gum tissue to retract for adequate cleaning of the wisdom tooth.

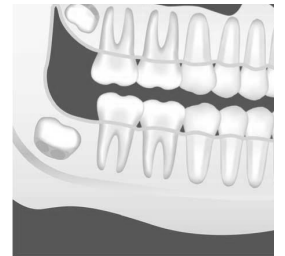
Partial Bony Impactions: There is enough space to allow the wisdom tooth to partially erupt. However, it cannot function in the chewing process and creates cleaning problems.

Complete Bony Impactions: There is NO space for the tooth to erupt. It remains totally below the jawbone or if partially visible requires complex removal techniques.

Why Should I Have Impacted Teeth Removed?

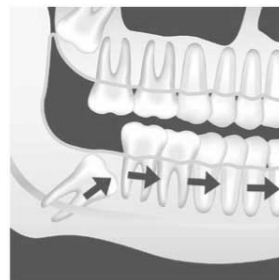
If you do not have enough room in your mouth for your third molars to erupt and they are impacted, a number of problems may occur, including:

- Infection
- Damage to the adjacent teeth
- Cyst formation
- Possible contribution towards crowding of the other teeth



Impacted Teeth

Unless you have an active problem at the time of your consultation, the reason for removal is primarily preventative to avoid long-term problems.



Possible Crowding



Infection

What is The Best Age To Have Them Removed?

If it is recognized that you do not have enough room in your mouth for your third molars to erupt, it is usually advisable to have them removed at your earliest convenience. In some patients this can be as early as 13 or 14, whereas, in others it may not be until 17 or 18 years of age. The timing is largely dependent on your root development. Teeth with shorter, less developed roots are generally easier to remove. Younger patients will usually experience:

- **Faster healing**
- **More predictable final healing**
- **Fewer complications than an older patient**

What If I Don't Have Them Removed in

My Teenage Years?

If you do not have your impacted wisdom teeth removed in your teenage years or early in your twenties, more extensive problems may arise later in life. When it is necessary to remove impacted wisdom teeth in your thirties, forties or beyond, the post-operative course can be prolonged and there is a higher complication rate. Treating these complications is more difficult and less predictable than with a younger patient.



Damage to
Adjacent Teeth



Cyst Formation

What Happens On The Day My Wisdom Teeth Are Removed?

Once it has been determined that you will benefit from third molar surgery, you can schedule an appointment at a time that is convenient for you. Unless otherwise instructed, expect to be in the office for an hour. To ensure your comfort, we recommend an intravenous anesthetic. Anesthetic issues will be discussed by your surgeon. Plan to spend the rest of the day at home, with a responsible adult available to help, should the need arise. You will be given appropriate medications to make your post-operative course as comfortable as possible. We will provide specific verbal and written post-operative instructions.

What Happens Afterwards – How Will I Feel?

Each individual's reaction to surgery varies, and the sensation of pain can range from mild to moderate discomfort. You can expect approximately five to seven days of some discomfort before noting improvement. Facial swelling is not uncommon for several days following surgery. You will be given instructions to minimize this discomfort and swelling. You may also experience stiffness of your jaw muscles, chafing around the corners of your lips, facial bruising, and a small amount of oozing from the extraction sites. Most patients feel they are "over the hump" in 3 to 5 days.

Could There Be Any Problems?

As with any surgical procedure, there can be complications or unexpected post-operative results. These will be discussed during your third molar consultation appointment.

What Does It Cost – And Does Insurance

Cover It?

Because there are different types of impacted wisdom teeth, it is not possible to provide a realistic estimate of treatment cost until your x-rays have been reviewed and the best anesthetic option determined. Insurance companies have varying policies regarding the extent of coverage for given surgical procedures.



What's Next?

We look forward to meeting with you, answering any questions you may have, and discussing your treatment options. Please call **615-893-7736** to schedule an appointment.