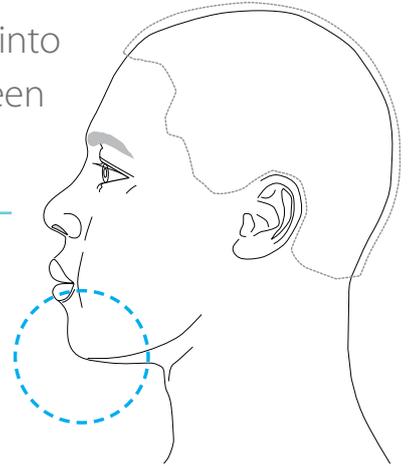


Wisdom Teeth

Wisdom teeth are the last teeth to develop. They usually erupt into the mouth during the late teens and early twenties. This has been called the age of wisdom, and hence the term wisdom teeth.



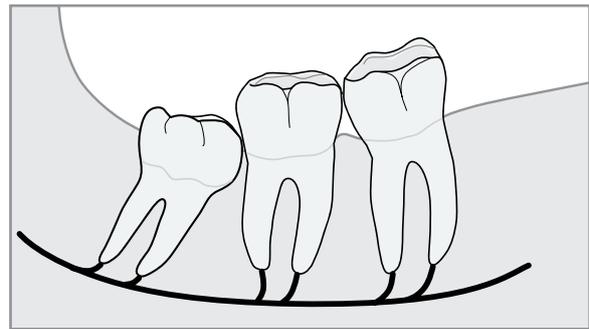
Why are they removed?

Due to evolution and changes in the human diet there is often not enough space for wisdom teeth in the mouth, and they frequently grow in the wrong direction. Teeth that are prevented from coming into the mouth are said to be impacted.

Common reasons for removal

Teeth that are healthy and not causing any problems do not require removal. There are several reasons for removing wisdom teeth, these include:

1. Recurrent infection of the gum surrounding the wisdom tooth
2. Decay in either the wisdom teeth or adjacent teeth
3. Pathology e.g. Cyst formation
4. Corrective jaw surgery
5. Other less common reasons



First Consultation

The doctor will ask about your problem and your medical history. A clinical examination will be carried out, and usually an X-ray of your jaw will be taken. All this will allow the doctor to decide whether or not your teeth require removal.

Depending on the degree of difficulty the doctor will recommend either a local anaesthetic (while you are awake) or a general anaesthetic (when you are asleep) for removal of your wisdom teeth. Either way the surgical procedure is the same.

The operation

This will usually involve a small surgical procedure. An incision is made in the gum followed by removal of bone and cutting up of the tooth as required. The gum is sutured back using dissolving sutures.

What can I expect after the operation?

- You will experience some discomfort for the first few days and will require regular painkillers.
- You will also be swollen and have some difficulty opening your mouth. Most people take a week off work.
- Some people experience discomfort around the jaw joints for several weeks after surgery. This settles with rest and a soft diet.
- Post-operatively you will be given verbal and written information on post-operative care and what to expect following minor oral surgery.

Risks and complications

The removal of wisdom teeth is a common procedure but as with all surgical procedures it has its risks.

- Two nerves run close to the lower wisdom teeth and provide the feeling/sensation to the lower lip, chin and tongue on each side. Occasionally during surgery the nerves can be bruised or, rarely, damaged and you may experience some numbness or altered sensation of either your lower lip, chin or tongue. If this occurs it is usually temporary and clears up over a period of several weeks or months. On a few rare occasions this may be permanent.
- Sometimes you may develop a localised infection in the tooth socket which is painful. It is treated with a dressing and antibiotics if required.
- Occasionally, removal of upper wisdom teeth may produce a communication between the mouth and the cheek sinus. If this is the case the socket will be sutured at the time of surgery.

The above are just some of the potential risks/ complications associated with the removal of wisdom teeth but they do not occur in all cases. There are also some less common complications which the doctor will warn you about if necessary.

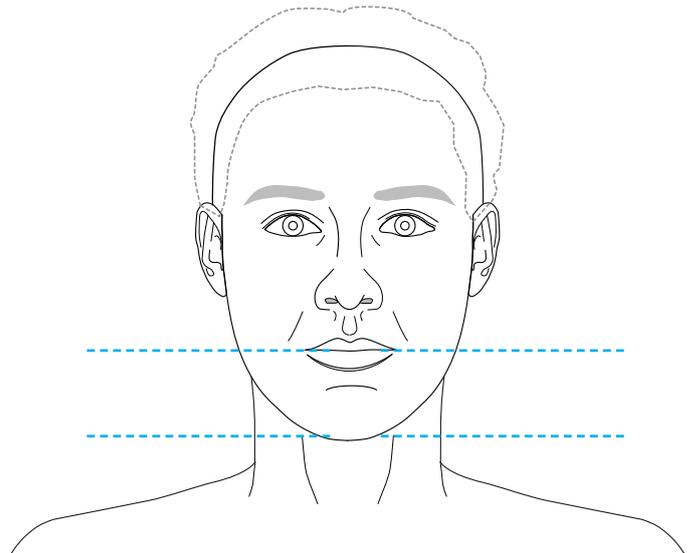
The majority of patients have an uncomplicated procedure and uneventful recovery.

Follow-up

We do not routinely review patients after their operation, however, occasionally it is necessary to do so.

You will have an open appointment for six weeks, should you have any problems or concerns.

Telephone numbers are on the post-operative information sheets so that you may contact us.



Please contact us if you have:

- **Numbness** lasting more than 3 weeks and not improving.
- **Excessive or persistent pain, swelling, bleeding, or other concerns.**

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