

WISDOM TOOTH REMOVAL

Notes for guidance

For earlier humans, the back molars (known as wisdom teeth) which usually start coming in during late adolescence and early adulthood were needed to chew the tough food they were forced to eat. Today's humans, however, do not really need their wisdom teeth. Like the unnecessary appendix, sometimes what we don't need can cause us serious problems. Because our jaws are no longer big enough to accommodate our wisdom teeth, they can often become impacted, grow in incorrectly, or may lead to other painful conditions. For these reasons, many people choose wisdom tooth removal as a way to prevent or stop some dental problems.

Is Wisdom Tooth removal right for you?

Wisdom tooth removal can either be done to correct an existing problem with your back molars or as a preventative action to stop potential problems from occurring. If you're having problems with your wisdom teeth, you may be able to try some alternatives, such as taking antibiotics to eliminate an infection, but the problem will most likely keep coming back without the removal of at least some of your wisdom teeth. However, if you want wisdom tooth removal for preventative reasons, your best time to take action is when you are young - because the teeth have not become fully rooted into your gums yet and because most wisdom tooth problems begin about the same time the teeth are starting to come. If you're older than 30 and have never had problems with your wisdom teeth, then preventative removal is probably unnecessary.

What is Wisdom Tooth Removal?

Wisdom tooth removal is a surgical procedure in which your oral surgeon or dentist will cut out the teeth which are causing you problems. Unlike normal tooth extraction, wisdom teeth require more effort to remove.

Generally, wisdom tooth removal is done in your dentist's office. Depending on the condition of your wisdom teeth and how many you are having removed, your dentist may decide to use a local or a general anesthetic. With the local anesthetic, you'll be awake for the procedure but you won't feel any pain. With the general, you will be asleep during the removal.

Are you a good candidate?

The best way to know if you're a good candidate for wisdom teeth removal is to talk to your dentist. He or she will be able to evaluate your problem and determine the best course of action. However, if you're having frequent, painful problems due to your wisdom teeth then your dentist will probably recommend removal.

As usual, the best candidates for this type of surgery are already fairly healthy. Because any kind of oral surgery can increase your risks for developing an infection, you may not want to have wisdom tooth removal performed if you have a compromised immune system, liver disease, or heart problems.

For preventative wisdom tooth removal, the best candidates are young and are the ones most likely – based on a dentist's evaluation – to develop problems because of these molars.

If your wisdom teeth have caused an infection in your mouth, you will need to treat and eliminate that infection before you can have your wisdom teeth removed.

How is the procedure performed?

After your dentist or oral surgeon has given you the anesthetic and makes sure you are not going to feel anything, he or she will begin the extraction. First, the dentist will need to cut into your gum in order to get down to where your wisdom tooth is. If any bone is covering your wisdom teeth, this will be removed with a drill.

Once the dentist is able to reach the wisdom tooth, he or she will cut it loose from the tissue around it in order to remove it. In some cases, the dentist will cut the actual tooth into several smaller pieces so that it can be taken out more easily. When the dentist has finished, he will sew up the incision into your gum.

Depending on how difficult it will be to reach your wisdom teeth and on how many teeth you are having removed, the procedure can take several minutes to a half an hour to complete.

How long will it take before I feel normal again?

For the first few days after the procedure, you will have some bleeding and pain to deal with, and you'll need to keep gauze on the area where the tooth was removed to help stop the bleeding. Using ice packs on your cheek and taking prescribed pain medication can help you cope with the swelling and with the discomfort.

You'll also need to avoid using a straw or smoking cigarettes for 24 to 48 hours after the procedure because the "sucking" action can cause complications. When you feel like eating, you'll want to have only liquid or soft foods at first, then gradually work in more solid foods over the course of the next few days. Plan on taking at least a day or two off from work and other activities because resting will help you heal faster.

If you have no complications, you'll be feeling better in 2 to 3 days.

Are there any risks?

As with any surgery, there are potential risks from the anesthetic. However, those types of problems are generally rare, especially with local anesthetic. Other serious but very uncommon risks include a jaw fracture (caused when the tooth is removed), permanent mouth numbness, and nerve damage.

The common complication, however, is usually dry socket. "Dry socket" occurs when the blood clot forming over the extraction site falls out. This can cause significant pain and an increased healing time. Dry socket can sometimes occur for no reason but is often caused when patients use a straw, smoke a cigarette, or do any type of sucking action too soon after the extraction, so it is imperative to follow your dentist's instructions to the letter.

Will I be happy with my results?

Although the days following your wisdom tooth removal can be difficult, once your healing is completed, you will probably be very happy with the results, especially if you've been suffering from reoccurring issues with your wisdom teeth before. Removing the teeth should prevent any future problems.

Further Information

This brochure has been prepared to give a basic understanding of the procedure before a consultation takes place, and to cover many of the questions frequently asked about this type of cosmetic surgery. Final decisions should not be made until an individual assessment has taken place with the surgeon.

There is no obligation on the part of the patient to undergo surgery by attending for consultation.

If you have any further questions or would like to arrange a consultation please fill in the online form on our website at www.surgeryone.co.uk. All enquiries are always treated confidentially.