

# WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT WISDOM TEETH REMOVAL

If they grow in properly, wisdom teeth are no different from any other teeth in your mouth. However, if they become impacted, or erupt in a strange angle or location, they may need to be removed.



disease, or causing problems with adjacent teeth or restorations. Some dentists also may recommend removing wisdom teeth before they're fully erupted in order to prevent such problems from developing.

## How do I know if I need my wisdom teeth removed?

If your wisdom teeth need to be removed, you may experience a variety of symptoms, including pain, infection, and swelling of the face or gumline. Your dentist can determine whether you need your wisdom teeth removed by taking X-rays and examining your mouth. Wisdom teeth that are not removed should be monitored, as they may cause problems later in life. Extraction is usually an outpatient procedure, performed by a dentist or oral surgeon, using a local sedation or general anesthetic.

**[Third molars] are referred to as wisdom teeth because they tend to develop later in life than other teeth, between the ages of 17 and 21.**

## What are wisdom teeth?

Wisdom teeth are another name for third molars. Most people have three permanent molars in each quadrant of their mouth. First molars typically erupt around age 6, while second molars emerge around age 12. The third molars are the last to erupt. They are referred to as wisdom teeth because they tend to develop later in life than other teeth, between the ages of 17 and 21.

## Why do wisdom teeth sometimes need to be removed?

Some wisdom teeth may become impacted (prevented from erupting properly). Many dentists recommend the extraction of impacted wisdom teeth because of the problems they may cause, including infection, decay of adjacent teeth, gum disease, cysts and tumors.

Wisdom teeth that have already erupted also may need to be removed if they are nonfunctional, badly decayed, interfering with your bite, involved with or at risk of gum

## Are there any complications associated with wisdom tooth extractions?

The most common complication associated with wisdom tooth extractions is dry socket, a painful condition that occurs when the blood clot at the extraction site does not form correctly or is lost prematurely. Because this blood clot serves as the foundation for new tissue and bone to develop, dry socket delays the normal healing process.

To prevent dry socket, do not smoke, consume carbonated beverages or drink through a straw after a wisdom tooth extraction. Rinsing with salt water can help keep your mouth clean after the procedure. However, you should avoid excessive rinsing or spitting while your mouth heals.

Before tooth extraction, be sure to tell your dentist about any medications or dietary supplements that you are taking because they could interfere with the healing process. To avoid complications after the procedure, follow your dentist's instructions regarding eating and drinking, pain management and keeping the extraction site clean.