

WISDOM TEETH

Wisdom teeth, or third molars, are the final teeth to develop in the mouth, usually in our late teens or early twenties. The 4 wisdom teeth can be found in each back corner of the mouth. Not all people have wisdom teeth. If wisdom teeth fit with other teeth, they can stay and act like other molars for chewing food.

Often times, wisdom teeth become trapped in the jawbone and don't break through the gum tissue. Sometimes wisdom teeth are crooked and cause cavities or gum disease. If wisdom teeth are crooked, blocked by other teeth or have a flap of gum tissue on top, plaque and food can enter around the tooth and cause cavities, gum disease or infection.

X-rays are taken to see if you have wisdom teeth and how they are placed in your jawbone.

In many cases, it is a good idea that trapped wisdom teeth be pulled. Depending on the location of the tooth, taking out the wisdom tooth can be done in your dentist's office.



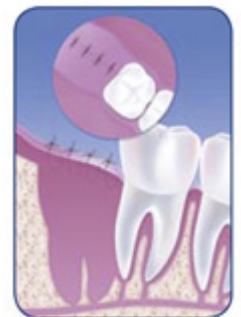
Angular, bony impaction of third molar (wisdom tooth)



Soft tissue impaction of third molar.



An incision is made and overlying soft tissue and bone are removed, exposing the crown of the impacted tooth.



The tooth is extracted whole or surgically cut into large pieces, which can be removed separately if the entire tooth cannot be removed at once. The site is closed with stitches.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT WISDOM TOOTH REMOVAL:

- Use ice packs on the cheek for swelling, putting the pack on for 30 minutes and leaving it off for 30 minutes
- Bite on clean gauze to stop bleeding
- Eat soft foods and drink extra liquids
- Don't chew hard or crunchy foods in tender areas
- Brush carefully the day after surgery
- Follow the instructions for taking any drugs your dentist recommends
- Don't use drinking straws to keep the blood clot in the tooth socket
- Your dentist may tell you to use a mouthwash

Call your dentist or doctor right away if you have a lot of bleeding, swelling, severe pain, or fever.

It will take several weeks to months for the mouth to heal completely after the wisdom teeth have been removed

Be sure to follow the special home care instructions provided by your dental professional.