



## Wisdom Teeth Information

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Wisdom teeth are the very back teeth on either side of the upper and lower jaws, and are more correctly described as the third molar teeth. They are the last teeth to erupt into the mouth, usually between the ages of 17 and 21 years.

It is quite common for there to be insufficient space in the jaws to allow wisdom teeth to take their correct position, and consequently they remain partly or completely below the surface of the gum. Sometimes they may be deeply buried inside the jawbone. Wisdom teeth, which have failed to develop into a normal position, are commonly referred to as being "impacted".

### PROBLEMS ARISING FROM IMPACTED WISDOM TEETH

- By far the most common problem associated with lower wisdom teeth is infection of the overlying gum, a condition called "pericoronitis". This is a painful and occasionally serious infection. Treatment may involve use of antibiotics. Wisdom teeth which are partly-erupted through the gums are most likely to be affected. It is preferable to remove such teeth before they become infected, as there are fewer complications with healing.
- There is often a pocket between the wisdom tooth and the tooth in front that is difficult to keep clean. This may lead to decay starting in the wisdom tooth, or worse, in the second molar tooth in front.
- Many orthodontists believe that pressure from the developing wisdom teeth can cause the front teeth to become overcrowded, and removal of wisdom teeth is often recommended before or immediately after orthodontic treatment is completed. This is controversial.
- Pressure from a wisdom tooth, pushing on the second molar tooth in front, will occasionally cause the root of the second molar tooth to be resorbed, with subsequent damage to or loss of the second molar tooth.
- Wisdom teeth buried beneath the surface are sometimes associated with development of a cyst, which may cause considerable damage to the jawbone, or more rarely be associated with development of tumours.
- Impacted wisdom teeth constitute a weakness in the lower jaw, and this is the most common site for a fracture when a broken jaw occurs.

## Common Questions

### What if I'm very anxious about dental treatment and don't want to have treatment awake?

Dr Jaclyn Wong understands how anxiety provoking dental treatment can be and will thoroughly discuss your treatment options with you during your consultation, to provide you with the most cost effective and appropriate technique to make your experience as calm and pleasant as possible. She is able to provide treatment either under local anaesthetic (numbing with injections) or under general anaesthetic (asleep).

### What is the usual recovery time?

Most people experience some discomfort and swelling following removal of wisdom teeth but the degree of this varies from person to person. On average, swelling tends to peak 2 days following surgery and settle by the end of the first week. Pain killers are usually needed for the first few days after surgery. A medical certificate can be provided for on average 1 week following surgery.

### Is having wisdom teeth out painful?

This experience should not be painful. If having them removed under local anaesthetic, surgery will not proceed until it is confirmed that the anaesthetic is effective. There should be no sensation other than a "pressure" sensation. If under general anaesthetic, you will be unconscious and hence feel nothing at all.

### How much will it all cost?

It is important to assess your XRs before being able to advise on the cost of surgery to remove your wisdom teeth. Every patient's experience is unique and some patients only have 1, 2 or 3 wisdom teeth. Not all wisdom teeth are complex or difficult to remove. A financial quote will be provided based on the complexity of each wisdom tooth at the time of your consultation. It is our aim to provide a cost effective treatment option and competitive pricing. Pricing can range from \$1200 to a maximum of \$2100 for 4 wisdom teeth, depending on degree of difficulty.

