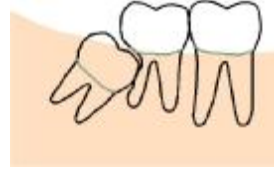


The Trouble with Wisdom Teeth

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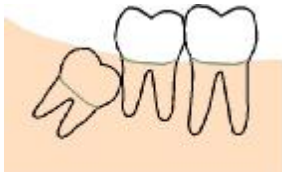
What's wrong with them?

There's nothing wrong with wisdom teeth themselves they're just like any other teeth. The problem, when there is one, is lack of space. Third molars erupt into the mouth last, and in many cases there just isn't enough space left for them after the other teeth. As a result they become impacted, or unable to erupt fully into the mouth.



Third molars that are impacted well below the surface are much less prone to decay and infection, and the decision to keep or remove them is less simple. Less common complications from these teeth include damage to the surrounding bone, formation of cysts, and resorption (dissolving) of part of the adjacent tooth.

What problems does that cause?



When third molars approach the surface of the gum but are unable to erupt completely, they become exposed to saliva and bacteria, and prone to decay and gum infections (they can even decay when they are completely covered by gum tissue.)

The most common wisdom tooth complication is recurring infection around them. The infection can usually be treated with antibiotics, but usually returns again, and can become more severe with time.

Decay can be quite extensive, because incompletely erupted teeth are impossible to clean thoroughly. It can involve, and sometimes severely damage, adjacent teeth.



Do I need to have them removed if they're not causing trouble yet?

If an xray identifies likely future problems, there are several advantages to early removal. It avoids the pain and inconvenience of infection, and eliminates the risk of permanent damage from the wisdom teeth. The surgery is also much easier if done early, especially before the roots have fully developed.

What's involved in removing them?

When you're ready, we'll refer you to a dental specialist (an Oral & Maxillofacial surgeon) for consultation, and, if appropriate, for the surgery.

Extractions are most often done in the specialist's office, with local anaesthetic and sedation (you don't have to be awake for it). The oral surgeon will discuss any particular concerns or special aspects of your treatment with you at the consultation appointment. Recovery, if the teeth are removed early, is typically a matter of a few days.