

## Why Remove Wisdom Teeth?

Wisdom teeth (third molars) are positioned in the very back of your mouth behind your 12yr old molars. They are the last of your teeth to erupt. Removal of wisdom teeth is not necessary for everyone. Your dentist will take many things into consideration when deciding what the best treatment is for you.



### Reasons for keeping Wisdom Teeth

The following are reasons as to why you would not need to remove wisdom teeth:

- They healthy and decay free
- They are fully erupted (not covered by gum)
- They are positioned correctly and biting properly with the opposing tooth
- They are able to be cleaned adequately so that cavities don't form

### Reasons for removing wisdom teeth

Many times wisdom teeth don't have room to grow properly and can cause problems. Erupting wisdom teeth can grow at various angles in the jaw, sometimes even horizontally. Some wisdom teeth only partially emerge through the gums. Other times, they remain completely hidden. Wisdom teeth that aren't able to emerge normally become impacted, or trapped, within your jaw. Your dentist will often refer to you have a full mouth X-Ray called an OPG to be able to see an overall view of all your teeth and where they are positioned.



OPG

The following are reason as to why your dentist would recommend you have your wisdom teeth removed:

- Wisdom teeth that are partially emerged through the gums. This increases the chance of a bacterial infections under the gum around the tooth. These infections can flare up at anytime and often happens multiple times, most commonly when you immune system is under more strain than usual (eg stressed or sickness).

Wisdom tooth is partially erupted (half covered by gum). Dark area is where infection is present



- Un-erupted wisdom teeth can grow crooked and get stuck. It might be ok to leave them in some cases but in others these wisdom teeth can actually cause damage to your other teeth. If there is a space between you 12yr old molar and wisdom tooth that you can't clean properly decay can start to form and may even go undetected for a long time.

You are unable to keep this area clean



Dark area of decay on 12yr old molar

- A fluid-filled sac (cyst) develops around an un-erupted wisdom tooth, which can damage surrounding tissue or bone

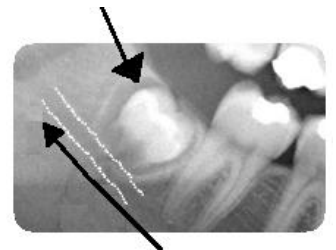
Dark area is a cyst



- If patient is experiencing any pain caused by the wisdom tooth/teeth.

To prevent future problems dentists often recommend removing the wisdom teeth before they emerge or grow too large. If left to grow to full size they can become more firmly rooted in the jaw and the tooth's roots can end up being closer to the nerve canal posing a greater risk of nerve damage when removed. The younger you are the more likely you are to recover faster from surgery. This is why many teenagers or young adults have their wisdom teeth extracted before the teeth cause problems.

Wisdom tooth forming



Nerve canal running along the jaw

Please turn page over to view risk of wisdom teeth removal and don't hesitate to contact us if any of your questions are unanswered.

