

WISDOM TEETH REMOVAL

Your Wisdom Teeth Removal Evaluation

Before suggesting that you may have your wisdom teeth removed, your dentist will do a thorough examination. This may include an exam, dental x-rays and a CT scan of your teeth and jaws.

Impacted Wisdom Teeth

Impacted wisdom teeth can grow in almost any direction. They may grow in straight or at an angle. Even if they grow in straight, there may not be enough room in the jaw to allow them to fully erupt.

Wisdom teeth Dental X-rays

X-ray images can show the positions of teeth that haven't fully erupted. They can also show decay and other problems, such as bone loss. This helps plan your treatment. Three kinds of dental x-rays are used:

CT Scan x-rays show a 3D image of the jawbone and tooth position. These can also show how close the roots of your wisdom teeth are to nerves, arteries, and other structures in or near the jaws

Intraoral x-rays show small images of 3 to 6 teeth at a time, plus a portion of the jawbone. These x-rays are often taken as part of a dental checkup.

Panoramic x-rays show a complete image of all the teeth and both jaws. These can tell your dentist more about the health of your jawbones.

Preparing for Wisdom Teeth Surgery

Your dentist would tell you how long the surgery is likely to take. Including recovery from anesthesia, it may last between 45 minutes and 2 hours. Before surgery, be sure to:

Arrange time off from work or school. You'll need a day or more to rest and begin to heal.

Tell your dentist about any medications you normally take. Your dentist may advise some medication changes.

Follow your dentist's instructions on eating and drinking before surgery. You may be asked not to eat or drink anything after the midnight before surgery if general anesthesia is required.

Wear loose, comfortable clothing. Choose a shirt or blouse with short sleeves. This makes inserting an intravenous (IV) line easier if required.

Arrange for a ride home. An adult family member or friend should drive you home after wisdom teeth surgery. Don't drive yourself, and don't take public transportation!

Anesthesia Options for Wisdom Teeth Removal

The type of anesthesia you may receive depends on your dentist's recommendation and your preference. Your insurance coverage may also be a factor. Tell your dentist if you have had problems with anesthesia in the past. Types of anesthesia include:

Local anesthetic. This numbs the area around the tooth to be extracted. Local anesthetic is used even if another type of anesthesia is also given to you.

Sedative. This helps you stay relaxed but awake during surgery. Nitrous oxide ("laughing gas") is one type of sedative. Other sedatives are given in pill form or by IV.

IV and General anesthesia. This puts you to sleep during surgery. Your surgeon may advise using it if the extraction is likely to be difficult. Or it may be an option if you prefer to be asleep.

Wisdom Teeth Removal Risks and Complications

Any dental surgical procedure has risks. The risks of wisdom teeth removal vary depending on your age and the position of the teeth. Risks include:

Sore joints and muscles. Jaw soreness, bruising, or swelling is normal after removal. Problems with the jaw joint or difficulty opening the mouth fully can also occur. These problems often heal in a week or two. But sometimes they last longer and require treatment.

Dry socket. After surgery, a blood clot fills the extraction site. A clot that dissolves or dislodges too soon after surgery can cause pain and slow recovery. Dry socket is treated with a special dressing.

Infection. This is often treated with antibiotics or by draining the infection.

Side effects of anesthesia. Sedation or general anesthesia can cause nausea, sore throat, and other side effects.

Sinus problems. The upper jaw maxillary sinus cavity may be entered during surgery. This can require further treatment.

Nerve injury. This can cause loss of taste or areas of numbness, tingling, or pain in the teeth, gum, tongue, or lips. In most cases, the nerve heals over time, but further treatment may be needed.

Weakening of the jaw. If bone has been removed, the jawbone may become more prone to fracture.

Wisdom teeth The Healing Process

Healing after wisdom teeth removal vary significantly from taking several days to several weeks to few months. First, a blood clot forms in the socket where the wisdom tooth was removed. Within a day or two, the socket starts filling with repair tissue. This lays the foundation for bone tissue to grow. When new bone tissue fills the socket, healing is complete.