

Wisdom Teeth Removal

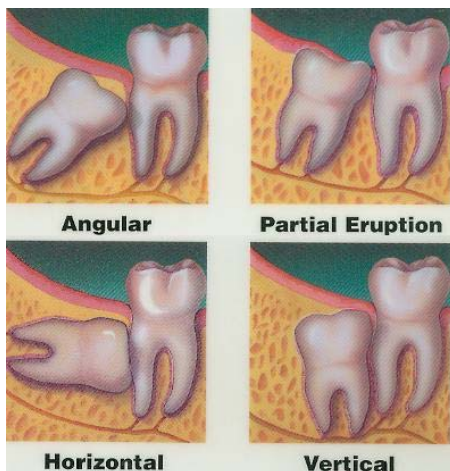
Wisdom teeth, found at the back of the mouth, can cause problems for some people and may need to be removed. Removal of wisdom teeth is a very common procedure.

What are wisdom teeth?

Wisdom teeth are the last molars on each side of your mouth. Most people have 4 wisdom teeth. They are also the last teeth to emerge, or erupt, usually when a person is between the age of 16 and 20.

Since wisdom teeth are the last permanent teeth to come in, or erupt, there is often not enough room left in your mouth to accommodate them. This can lead to wisdom teeth that are impacted or trapped beneath the gum tissue by other teeth or bone. If teeth are impacted, swelling and tenderness may occur.

Wisdom teeth can be present in almost any orientation (see diagram) but usually only cause problems when there is a partial eruption.



What are the problems caused by impacted wisdom teeth?

Impacted wisdom teeth can cause the following problems:

- **Infection or inflammation**
When an impacted wisdom tooth starts to push through the gum, an infection can start around the tooth. The gums may be swollen, red and painful and the jaw may be stiff. The presence of an infection can cause bad breath and an unpleasant taste
- **Pain**
Pressure from the wisdom tooth may cause pain the tooth next to it
- **Erosion Cavity - Damage to Nearby Molars**
An impacted wisdom tooth may trap food against the adjacent molar. This can cause cavities in both teeth and may result in the loss of both teeth instead of one.

- **Ulcers**
The upper wisdom teeth may push sideways and rub on the inside of the cheek causing ulcers
- **Crowding**
Wisdom teeth may push nearby teeth out of their correct position and cause crowding. The removal of wisdom teeth do not improved crowding already present
- **Cysts**
If a wisdom tooth is not removed, a sac of fluid called a cyst can form around the tooth. The cyst can destroy bone, displace or damage other teeth and the gums. Cyst formation are typically rare.

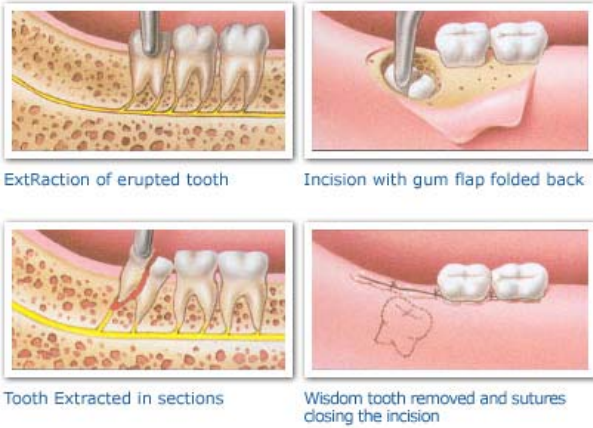


How are wisdom teeth removed?

Removal of wisdom teeth is a very common procedure.

Upper wisdom teeth are often (but not always) very easy to remove. Lower wisdom teeth vary in their difficulty of removal. If the tooth is impacted (growing at an angle and wedged into the adjacent tooth or tilted backwards), or “partially erupted” (only part way through in the mouth) – the extraction may be more difficult and may require minor surgery including:

- Dividing the tooth into segments so it can be removed easily and safely
- Removal of a small portion of the bone to access the tooth
- Using stitches to close the gums following removal of the teeth to aid in healing. The stitches we use are typically dissolvable and will disappear within 4-6 weeks.



The vast majority of wisdom teeth can be removed in the dental chair. If there are any specific concerns or if you do not want to remain awake during the surgery we may refer you to be seen in a hospital setting under a general anaesthetic.

Local anaesthetic is used to eliminate pain however pressure may be felt during the procedure. We recommend taking 2x500mg Paracetamol (Panadol) or 2x200mg Ibuprofen (Neurofen) tablets 1 hour before your appointment to minimise discomfort during and following the procedure.

Taking care of yourself after surgery

- Rest at home after the surgery
- Do not drive, engage in active exercise or operate machinery
- Take several days off from work, school or other duties
- Do not drink alcohol or smoke for at least 1 week
- Eat soft foods such as soups, pureed vegetables and meats and gelatine for the first two days
- Drink lots of fluids
- Use ice packs to reduce swelling and pain
- Take any medications or pain killers as instructed by your dentist

I am anxious. What are my options?

We understand the some patients may be anxious over the procedure so we are able to provide sedation in the form of Pentrox “happy gas”.

You will still be awake during the procedure however the gas provides significant anxiety relief and gives the effect of “zoning out” or “being spaced out”.

As the sedation is breathed in, it will quickly leave your system after the procedure is completed. Driving is possible after a period of monitoring by our staff, but it is preferred that you have someone to pick you up if removal of the wisdom teeth requires minor surgery.

There is a minor additional cost for Pentrox sedation, however many of our patients have consider it as well worth the expense.

In the case that you wish to be completely asleep during the procedure, we can arrange a general anaesthetic session at the Redcliffe Peninsula Private Hospital. Additional hospital and anaesthetist fees are generally incurred for a general

anaesthetic but this will be thoroughly discussed with you if you opt for this option.

What are the risks of extraction/surgery?

There are risks with any surgical procedure. Any of the following could occur:

Likely: pain, swelling, bleeding.

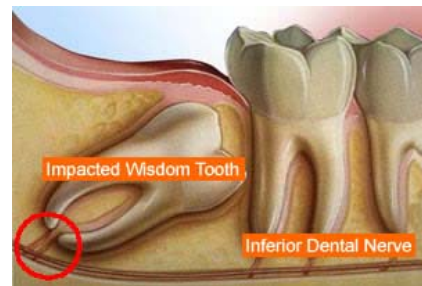
Possible: dry socket, infection, bone fracture.

Uncommon: damage to adjacent teeth, oroantral fistula – (a hole opening up between the extraction socket and your maxillary sinus)

Specific Risks:

Nerve Damage

Damage to the Inferior Dental Nerve or Lingual Nerve on each side of the Mandible (lower jaw). The Inferior Dental Nerve passes very close to the root of the lower wisdom tooth (often in contact with it) and gives feeling to the lower teeth, lower lip and chin on that side. Due to the closeness of this nerve to the area of surgery, there is a small chance of some damage to the nerve, which may cause numbness of the lower teeth, lower lip and chin.



The Lingual Nerve passes very close to the tongue side of the lower wisdom tooth and gives feeling and taste to that side of the tongue. Due to the closeness of this nerve to the area of surgery, there may be some damage to the nerve which may cause numbness and loss of taste to that side of the tongue.

Nerve damage is not common but if it occurs it may be temporary (6-12 months) or permanent.

Dry Socket

After the wisdom tooth is removed, a blood clot will form over the bone. This clot is important for proper healing and relief of pain.

If the blood clot is washed away or dissolves, the bone will be exposed. This is called a “dry socket”. The result is a constant throbbing pain which may last for many days. If you have pain like this, contact our clinic. To help prevent dry socket:

- For the first day after surgery do not rinse out your mouth or spit with force. This can loosen the blood clot and slow healing
- After the first day, you can rinse very gently with warm salt water. Rinse ever four hours or after meals. This will help healing, reduce swelling and pain and reduce the risk of infection
- Do not smoke after surgery
- For the first day after surgery, gently brush your teeth like normal except for the area of surgery