Wisdom teeth are located at the back of your mouth (the third molar teeth). They tend to come through in the late teens to early twenties. Some wisdom teeth do not come through fully (partially erupt) and some get stuck (impacted) against nearby bone or teeth.

You have been referred to us by your dentist, who has recommended removing one or more of your wisdom teeth. This documentation will give you a guide to removal of these teeth so that you can make an informed decision whether to have the procedure done or not. Please feel free to ask your dentist or our team any further questions regarding the procedure.

**Reasons for removing wisdom teeth?**

* Pericoronitis- Repeated or serious infection of the gum that partially covers your tooth.
* Tooth decay- affecting the wisdom tooth or neighbouring tooth. Food packing can cause decay, which makes it difficult for your dentist to restore.
* Wisdom tooth growing in the wrong direction.
* Position of wisdom tooth makes it difficult to clean thus causing repeated infections.
* Cysts near or around your tooth causing pain or other jaw problems.
* Surgery- to allow for jaw repositioning or orthodontic space management.

Wisdom teeth can take their time in coming through into the jaw and are often impacted. Impacted teeth are more likely to get repeated infections. An infection can be made worse if an upper wisdom tooth bites onto the tooth and gum. Therefore removing an upper wisdom tooth sometimes can cure the problem, delaying or even avoiding removal of the lower wisdom tooth. Please see NICE Guidelines at [www.nice.org.uk/guidance](http://www.nice.org.uk/guidance)

**Alternatives to removing wisdom teeth**

* Operculectomy- Is a small surgical procedure that removes the overlying gum over the partially erupted wisdom tooth. However this often grows back.
* Coronectomy-If the root of the wisdom tooth lies close to your nerve that supplies your lower lip, we can remove just the crown of your tooth.

Not having the wisdom tooth removed may cause your symptoms to get worse. There is a small risk of getting a serious life threatening infection.

**Wisdom Tooth Procedure and what it involves?**

* Confirmation of consent of the procedure and checking of personnel details. Please bring with you a list of recent medication.
* A Chlorhexidine mouthwash may be given for 2 minutes to reduce the risk of infection after the procedure.
* We will ask some questions and checks to make sure that you have come in for the right tooth and are happy for us to proceed further. Please help us by confirming your name, date of birth and the procedure that you are having. Also provide us with any changes to your medical history since you referral or any specialist information that would be helpful for the surgeons to know.
* Upper Wisdom Teeth- are usually easily removed under local anaesthetic.
* Lower Wisdom Teeth- can be more difficult and that is why you have been referred to our clinic. The procedure can take from 10 minutes to an hour, depending on how many wisdom teeth need to be removed and how difficult they are to remove.
* Wisdom tooth removal can involve cutting the gum to uncover your tooth, we may have to remove bone around your tooth and divide your tooth with a drill. We will discuss your procedure with you on the day of your appointment. The gum is closed off with stitches. The stitches are dissolvable. We may have to ask you to bite onto a gauze pack to stop any bleeding for about 10 minutes. Sometimes the stitches may not dissolve fully and may have to be removed by your own dentist.

**Complications-**We will endeavour to make the procedure as safe as possible but complications can happen. Some of these can be serious. Please read the list below, and we will be happy to answer any concerns that you may have.

* Pain can be related to the difficulty of the extraction. Simple painkillers and anti-inflammatory painkillers such as paracetamol and ibuprofen should alleviate any pain. Pain relief should be started before the numbness starts to wear off.
* Bleeding after the procedure.
* Infection. The extraction site may take longer to heal and you may need antibiotics.
* Dry Socket can occur a few days after the extraction and can involve severe pain. The risk of dry socket is higher with lower wisdom tooth removal or if you smoke.
* Retained broken roots. Sometimes it is not possible to remove the whole tooth and the dentist may decide it is safer to leave the root behind. However if this causes problems, you may need a larger procedure.
* Damage to nearby teeth. Sometimes nearby teeth can be loosened. These may also need to be removed if they do not firm up again. Fillings and crowns can also be loosened and may need to be replaced after healing as occurred.
* Sinus problems. Sometimes removing an upper tooth can cause an opening between the sinus and your mouth. This can cause infection (Sinusitis), pain and draining of fluid between your mouth and nose. The opening usually closes but you may need additional surgery to close the opening. Sometimes a tooth may get pushed into the sinus, again additional surgery may be required to remove the piece of tooth.
* Broken jaw.
* Trismus, is not being able to open your mouth fully and experiencing jaw stiffness. This is more common with lower wisdom tooth removal. Let your own dentist know if this doesn`t resolve within a couple of weeks.
* Damage to nerves that supply your lower lip and tongue. Lower wisdom tooth removal as a risk of permanent damage of less than 1 in 100. This leads to a loss of feeling in your lip or tongue. Any damage is usually temporary (risk: 1 in 10). However, it can take up to 18 months to recover. Only a small percentage of patients will not regain full sensation in their lip or tongue, between 1-4% after the first year.
* Bisphosphonate- associated osteonecrosis of your jaw, where your tooth socket does not heal properly. Let the dentist know if you are taking, or have ever taken, bisphosphonate medication, as this increases the risk of osteonecrosis. Usually patient`s with osteonecrosis will present with severe pain and the socket sites doesn`t heal properly.

**Recovery after the procedure-**The dentist will make sure you have stopped bleeding after the procedure. A responsible adult should take you home

If your wound starts to bleed, bite for 10-20 minutes on a pack of gauze, or on a clean handkerchief rolled into a small sausage shape.

**It can take up to two or three weeks to fully recover from the procedure. Most people will make a full recovery.**