



SMILE CREATIONS

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WISDOM TEETH

Your third molars are the last teeth to emerge from your gums during the late teen or "age of wisdom", thus the name wisdom teeth (you usually have four). In most, people, the jaws are too small and do not allow enough room for them to emerge straight like your other teeth. They often become trapped or impacted in the gums or jawbone, and in most cases, are nonfunctional. This lack of space and failure of the tooth to erupt can cause acute infection between the gum and the tooth, crowding of the teeth, cyst formation, tooth decay, and gum disease. The third molars in many can compromise your overall dentition. Since in most cases these teeth are nonfunctional, yet can cause potential problems, it is usually recommended that they be removed.

The best time for removal is usually at a young age (usually between 16 and 25) before the above problems can develop. At this age, the bone surrounding the teeth is still soft the root tips have not completely formed, the patient is usually in better general health, and will heal faster with fewer complications.

Remember that the objective is to prevent future problems and help maintain your overall dental health. The removal of wisdom teeth at an early age can truly be considered preventive dentistry.

WHAT CAN BE EXPECTED AFTER SURGERY?

- Discomfort:** Since this is an operation, pain after surgery is to be expected. The first day and evening is usually the most uncomfortable and pain medication will be prescribed to keep you comfortable as possible.
- Swelling:** A variable amount of swelling can be expected in one or both cheeks from stretching the mouth at the time of surgery. Swelling will normally take about two days to reach its worst and will take about one week to resolve.
- Trismus:** The jaw muscles may tighten up after surgery causing difficulty in opening the jaws. The amount of muscle tightness will determine what may be eaten after surgery.
- Bleeding:** Some bleeding is to be expected for several hours after surgery. This should be minimal and rarely causes problems.
- Infection:** The surgical site can become infected up to four weeks after surgery. Any unusual increase in swelling after the first few days should be reported to the dentist.
- Dry Socket:** The blood clot may break down approximately 24 days after surgery. An increase in pain or pain referred from the chin, neck, ear or forehead should be reported to the dentist. Packing the area with medicated gauze usually easily treats this condition.
- Paresthesia:** The main nerve of the lower jaw or nerve of the tongue may be damaged at the time of surgery. This is a rare condition that can lead to numbing of the tongue, teeth, lips and chin. This usually is temporary but permanent damage may occur.

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