

## Wisdom Teeth



### **What are they?**

Wisdom teeth are the last teeth to appear, at the back of the mouth, from the late teens onwards. Most people have four wisdom teeth, but it is not unusual to have fewer or even none at all.

Because they are the last teeth to form, there sometimes isn't room for them. They can come through at an angle, pressing against the teeth in front or the bone behind. This causes them to become impacted.

### **What will my dentist do?**

Watching how your teeth and jaws grow is part of your regular dental care.

- Radiographs (x-rays) can show where the wisdom teeth are in the jaw and how much room there is for them to come through, as well as showing any damage to the teeth in front.
- Radiographs (x-rays) will also show how simple or difficult it may be to take a wisdom tooth out

As wisdom teeth are coming through, the surrounding gum can sometimes become inflamed and sore. This is called "pericoronitis" it may settle down or come and go over a period of time. It is also important to keep your mouth as clean as possible with regular brushing and the use of mouthwash. If you have repeated bouts you should see your dentist.

If you need to have a wisdom tooth removed you should be able to fit it in with work or other commitments.

Most wisdom teeth are removed under a local anaesthetic, depending on how difficult the tooth is to remove, you may be referred to a specialist. Sedation or general anaesthetic may be considered by the specialist.

Sometimes, nerves can be damaged when lower wisdom teeth are removed. This leads to numbness in part of the tongue or in some teeth and part of the lower lip and chin, this is usually temporary.

What are the benefits of removing wisdom teeth that are causing problems?

- If you have problematic wisdom teeth removed there will be no more pain and infection
- It will usually make it easier for you to keep your mouth clean.

Normally there is no need to have wisdom teeth removed unless they are causing you problems.

