



Wisdom tooth removal

Also known as: Wisdom tooth extraction • Extraction of impacted third molars

Why remove wisdom teeth?

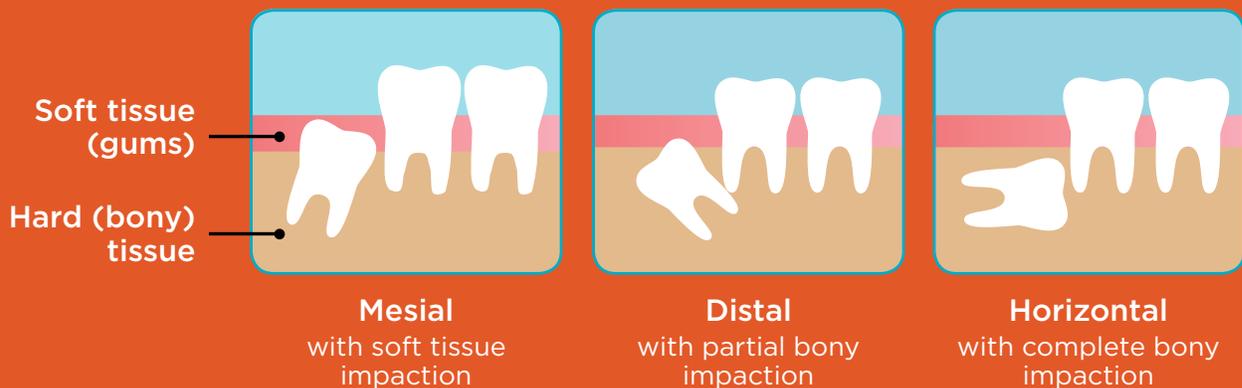
Did you know?

Wisdom teeth usually appear between ages 17 and 21. The ideal age to remove them is between 18 and 24, when two-thirds of the roots have formed.

Wisdom teeth are the last set of teeth to grow in. When they don't emerge completely from the gums (called impaction), your dentist may recommend surgery to remove them.

Types of impaction

- Wisdom teeth can be impacted at different levels. In **hard tissue (bony) impaction**, the tooth does not emerge from the bone. This can be **partial** or **complete**. In **soft tissue impaction**, the top of the tooth is above the bone and covered only by gum tissue.
- The tooth can also come in at different angles: straight (**vertical**), sideways (**horizontal**), angled away from the other teeth (**distal**) or angled towards the other teeth (**mesial**).



Did you know?

About 1 to 2% of the population grows more than four wisdom teeth.

What to expect

1. Your dentist will take x-rays of your mouth to get a look at your wisdom teeth. Depending on the position of your teeth, you may need referral to an oral surgeon. Most people choose to have all four teeth removed during the same procedure.
2. You will receive anesthesia. Depending on how complex the procedure is, you may receive:
 - **Local anesthesia** by a shot to numb the area where the tooth — or teeth — will be removed (you will stay awake)
 - **Sedation anesthesia** to put you in a “light sleep,” given intravenously or through a gas mask
 - **General anesthesia** through an IV or gas mask, for a “deep sleep”
3. The dentist or surgeon will open the gum tissue to remove the tooth. Some bone tissue may also be removed if it is covering the tooth.
4. The tooth will be removed. It may first be cut into smaller pieces to make it easier to take out.
5. The dentist or surgeon will sew up the wound.

After surgery

Follow these tips to ensure a successful recovery:

- Keep a gauze pad on the wound and change it frequently.
- Use an ice pack to reduce swelling.
- Avoid alcohol, smoking and physical activity.
- Rinse gently with warm salt water.
- Avoid using a straw. The pressure can damage the wound.
- Brush and floss normally to keep your mouth free of food debris and harmful bacteria. Be careful to not brush the wound.

What if I keep my wisdom teeth?

Keeping impacted wisdom teeth may put you at risk of:

- Infected gums
- Decay in nearby teeth
- Cysts
- Bone damage
- Crowded or misaligned teeth

If your wisdom teeth grow in correctly, with enough space in the mouth, they may not need to be removed. If there is a problem, however, they can be pulled without surgery.

Our Delta Dental enterprise includes these companies in these states:
Delta Dental of California — CA, Delta Dental of the District of Columbia — DC, Delta Dental of Pennsylvania — PA & MD, Delta Dental of West Virginia, Inc. — WV, Delta Dental of Delaware, Inc. — DE, Delta Dental of New York, Inc. — NY, Delta Dental Insurance Company — AL, DC, FL, GA, LA, MS, MT, NV, TX and UT.

Want to know more?

Check out related procedures:
simple tooth extraction • dental implant
[mysmileway.com](https://www.mysmileway.com)