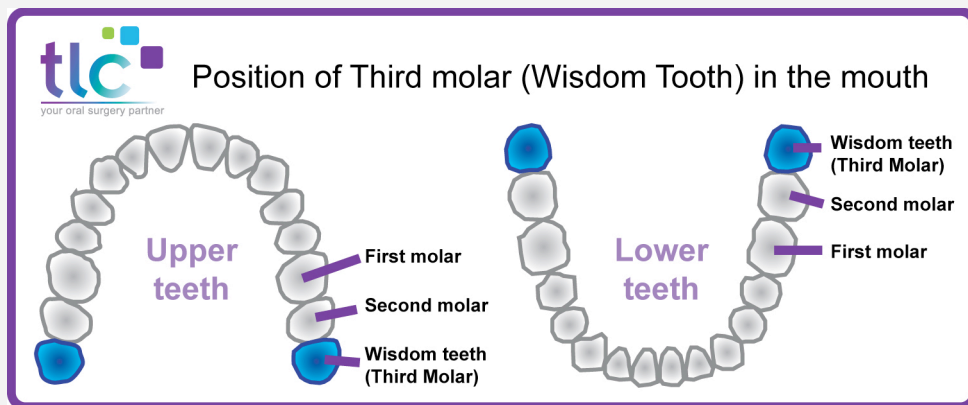


Wisdom teeth

What are wisdom teeth?

They are the third molars and the last teeth to emerge at the back of your mouth. This usually occurs in late teens ('the age of wisdom'). Most people have four, two in the upper jaw and two in the lower jaw.



Why am I having mine removed?

Surgical removal can be required for several reasons. Often, wisdom teeth get stuck ('impacted') against the adjacent tooth or within the jawbone and are not able to come through fully into the mouth. A partially exposed wisdom tooth can be difficult to keep clean. This can then cause chronic infection and discomfort in the surrounding gum tissue. Such infections may require treatment with antibiotics. A wisdom tooth can also become decayed or cause decay in neighbouring teeth. Your dentist may not be able to treat this decay until the wisdom tooth has been removed.

Impacted Wisdom Teeth

Impacted wisdom teeth can also adversely affect the attachment of adjacent teeth or be associated with cystic lesions.

How will it be removed?

This depends on the position of your tooth and the way it is impacted. Some can be quite straightforward to remove. More commonly, simple extraction is not possible and surgery is necessary to remove it. The type of the surgery needed depends on the position of the wisdom tooth. This may influence whether your operation is carried out under local anaesthesia alone or with additional intravenous sedation. **All options can be discussed with you during a consultation appointment.**

How long will the operation take?

This again depends on the position of your tooth, and whether the operation is being carried out with local anaesthesia alone or with additional intravenous sedation. An appointment for surgery under local anaesthesia usually lasts 45 minutes. When intravenous sedation is used, an appointment usually lasts 90 minutes. The longer time allows for the recovery period needed before you can be discharged home.

Will there be any stitches?

Sometimes stitches are needed and they are usually dissolvable

Will I be in pain afterwards?

You should not feel any pain immediately after the operation, as the area of surgery will be numb from the local anaesthetic. As the numbness wears off, the area might become uncomfortable and then you should take painkillers. We will supply you with these, with information about doses.

Could there be any after-effects?

This depends on the operation. If there are any issues in particular to be aware of, they will be discussed with you beforehand. There may be swelling and bruising in the area of surgery as well as some discomfort which might limit jaw opening. Bruising is usually at its most obvious two to three days after surgery and varies between patients. It normally resolves itself after 10 to 14 days.

Occasionally, an impacted lower wisdom tooth can be very close to nerves supplying the lower teeth, lip, chin, cheek and tongue. These can get bruised when the tooth is removed, resulting in the sensation of numbness or tingling in these areas.

This change in sensation only affects 2-5% of patients and is usually temporary. It can take up to six months to fully resolve itself. It only very rarely becomes permanent. If this is a factor for you to be aware of, due to the proximity of your wisdom tooth to the nerves, we will discuss it with you during your appointment.

When can I return to work?

This depends on your occupation and how you are after your treatment. It may be possible to return to work the next day. Some people need to take some time off work, especially if the operation has been carried out under intravenous sedation. We will give you appropriate advice for your particular circumstances. If non-dissolvable stitches are used, they are quick and easy to remove. An appointment will be arranged for this, usually one week after surgery.