

WISDOM TOOTH

Q:

I am turning 40 years old and have all four of my wisdom teeth. They are not generally causing no problems, except for crowding my teeth. Some of my friends tell me that I should extract my wisdom tooth out as they will eventually rot and worse, allow decay on my second molars.

Is this true? Also, how should I decide whether to have my wisdom teeth removed and what are the implications if I do/ not do so?

A:

First, let me explain what is wisdom tooth.

90% of people have at least one impacted wisdom tooth. Usually, one would have 32 teeth by the age of eighteen -however, the average mouth is made to hold only 28 teeth. Thus, it can be painful when the 32 teeth try to fit into a mouth that holds only 28 teeth. These four other teeth are your Third Molars, also known as "wisdom teeth." When your Third Molars align properly and gum tissue is healthy, wisdom teeth do not have to be removed. Unfortunately, this does not generally happen.

The extraction of wisdom teeth is necessary when they are prevented from properly erupting within the mouth. They may grow sideways, partially emerge from the gum and even remain trapped beneath the gum and bone. The longer you wait to see a dental professional, the more likely it is that your wisdom teeth can become impacted.



Raymond Lim

Dr Raymond Lim has been at the forefront of patient-centric dental care services and professional expertise since 2005. The National University of Singapore (NUS) alumnus who received a Bachelor of Dental Surgery (B.D.S) has advanced his professional career with three years at National Dental Centre treating trauma and emergency patients and a two-year post at polyclinics as the overall in charge. His subsequent years in private practice have further spurred his passion in implantology; he was awarded Aesthetic Implant Dentistry from the University of Uclan (UK) in 2011.

Founding B9 Dental Centre in 2013, Dr Raymond has seen early success with its current group of three dental centres within the first year. Lauded for their comprehensive expertise and trusted service, B9 Dental Centre was awarded with Top 10 Special Achievement in Dental Care Awards by Promising SME 500 2014.

B9 Clementi
449 Clementi Ave 3
#01-261 Singapore 120449
(Next to Clementi MRT)
Tel: 6777 8988

B9 The Star Vista
1 Vista Exchange Green
#01-02 Singapore 138617
(Next to Buona Vista MRT)
Tel: 6334 8988

B9 Toa Payoh
520 Lorong 6 Toa Payoh
#01-64 Singapore 310520
(Next to Toa Payoh MRT)
Tel: 6251 8988



Signs of infected wisdom tooth

- Pain
- Red or swollen gums
- Tender or bleeding gums
- Swelling around the jaw
- Bad breath
- An unpleasant taste in your mouth
- Headache

An impacted wisdom tooth can cause many problems:

Damage to other teeth.

If the wisdom tooth pushes against the second molar, it may damage the second molar or make it more vulnerable to infection. This pressure can also cause problems with crowding of the other teeth or orthodontic treatments to straighten other teeth.

Decay

Partially impacted wisdom teeth appear to be more vulnerable to tooth decay (caries) than other teeth. This probably occurs because wisdom teeth are harder to clean and because food and bacteria get easily trapped between the gum and a partially erupted tooth.

Gum disease

The difficulty of cleaning impacted, partially erupted wisdom teeth also makes them a vulnerable site for the development of a painful, inflammatory gum condition

Cysts

The wisdom tooth grows in a sac within the jawbone. The sac can fill with fluid,

forming a cyst that can damage the jawbone, teeth and nerves. Rarely, a tumor — usually a noncancerous tumor — develops. This complication may require removal of tissue and bone.

Most dental professionals advise that wisdom teeth should be removed before wisdom teeth pain becomes an issue. It is important to talk to your dentist about your concerns. Anxiety is common and nothing to be embarrassed about. Ask your dentist for suggestions on how to cope with your anxiety and discomfort.

In most cases, the removal of wisdom teeth is performed under local anesthesia or general anesthesia. In our clinics, these options as well as the surgical risks (i.e. sensory nerve damage, sinus complications) will be discussed with you before the procedure is performed. Once the teeth are removed, the gum is sutured. To help control bleeding, bite down on the gauze placed in your mouth. Upon discharge, your post-operative kit will include postoperative instructions, a prescription for pain medication, antibiotics and a follow-up appointment in one week for suture removal.

The surgery will be conducted by our experienced and skilful dental surgeons, and we also offer ways to ease your anxiety, such as listening to music or watching videos during the surgery. All charges of wisdom teeth surgery can also be fully claimed from Medisave. **PRIME**