



WISDOM TEETH..REMOVE OR KEEP??

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Do I Need to Have My Wisdom Teeth Removed?

WISDOM TEETH

If you were recommended to have your wisdom teeth taken out. But they don't hurt, you say, so why remove them? These days, oral surgery to remove wisdom teeth is a standard practice -- almost a rite of passage for young adults. It's not always necessary, though.

Preventive Efforts

Still, just because your wisdom teeth aren't a source of pain doesn't mean there's nothing wrong. The teeth could be stuck, or impacted. That means they can't break through your jaw and into your mouth. Maybe your mouth is too small to make room for them, or the teeth could be growing at an angle to other teeth. They can damage the tooth next door if they push up against it.

Some dentists take out healthy molars to prevent problems later on. As you age, the bones in your mouth get harder. That makes your teeth tougher to remove.

If you wait, you could have problems after surgery that range from heavy bleeding and fractured teeth to severe numbness and minor loss of movement in your jaw. These troubles could last a few days or a lifetime.

When Is Removal Needed?

When wisdom teeth cause problems, or X-rays show they might down the line, they need to come out. Other good reasons to take them out include:

- **Damage to other teeth:** That extra set of molars can push your other teeth around, causing mouth pain and bite problems.
- **Jaw damage:** Cysts can form around the new teeth. If they aren't treated, they can hollow out your jaw and damage nerves.
- **Sinus Issues:** Problems with wisdom teeth can lead to sinus pain, pressure, and congestion.
- **Inflamed Gums:** Tissue around the area can swell and may be hard to clean.
- **Cavities:** Swollen gums can create pockets between teeth that help bacteria grow and cavities form.
- **Alignment:** Impacted wisdom teeth can cause problems with crowding of other teeth and even make treatment to straighten other teeth necessary.

Your dentist will look at the shape of your mouth and the position of your teeth to make a decision. Your age plays a role, too.

Still not ready to part with your molars? You can ask your dentist to explain what he sees with your teeth. In many cases, you can wait several months to see if things change before making your decision. But if you have pain or notice swelling or a bad odor near your back teeth, it may be time for a second look.

WebMD Medical Reference Reviewed by

According to the American Dental Association, wisdom teeth removal may be necessary if you experience changes in the area of those teeth, such as:

- Pain
- Repeated infection of soft tissue behind the lower last tooth
- Fluid-filled sacs (cysts)
- Tumors
- Damage to nearby teeth
- Gum disease
- Extensive tooth decay

The decision to remove wisdom teeth isn't always clear. Talk to your dentist or an oral surgeon about the position and health of your wisdom teeth and what's best for your situation.

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