

## **Surgical removal of a wisdom tooth**

### **Q1. What is an impacted wisdom tooth?**

A1. Wisdom teeth are normally the last teeth to grow through the gums and sometimes there is not always enough space for them to grow normally. If a tooth doesn't have enough space to grow it can emerge at a strange angle or possibly get stuck and appear partly or not at all. This is known as an impacted wisdom tooth and occurs more frequently for the bottom wisdom teeth.

### **Q2. Why does my wisdom tooth need to be surgically extracted?**

A2. If you have an impacted wisdom tooth it can increase the likelihood of food becoming trapped and decay occurring. It can also cause pain and soreness in the surrounding gums and cheek and possibly damage neighbouring teeth.

### **Q3. Do impacted wisdom teeth always need to be extracted?**

A3. No not always. If they are not causing any problems then they can be left where they are.

### **Q4. How are wisdom teeth removed?**

A4. Firstly you will be given a local anaesthetic to numb the area. Your dentist will need to rock your tooth back and forth to loosen it from the socket. When the tooth is partly buried in the gum and bone and trapped behind the tooth in front they will need to make an incision in the gum to get to the tooth. Sometimes a small portion of bone will need to be removed in order to expose the tooth enough to make it come loose. It may also be necessary to break the tooth into smaller pieces to be able to remove it.

After the tooth has been removed your dentist will close the gum with stitches and you will need to come back 7-10 days later to have these removed and the area checked to make sure it is healing properly.

### **Q5. Does it hurt?**

A5. You will be numb for the duration of the procedure but if you happen to feel any pain then the local anaesthetic can be topped up at any time during the procedure. You may have some swelling, bruising and discomfort afterwards. It is usually worse for the first few days and your dentist will make sure you have painkillers needed during that time.

### **Q6. What aftercare is required?**

A6. You will need to avoid chewing on that side of your mouth for a few days. You should also avoid any vigorous exercise, smoking, drinking alcohol and getting too hot. It is recommendable to use an antiseptic mouthwash such as chlorhexidine mouthwash 0.2% to prevent infection as it will be difficult to brush and keep the area clean due to soreness and

swelling after the surgery. You should rinse with antiseptic mouth wash 3 to 4 times a day for about 2 weeks. In some cases your dentist may prescribe antibiotics as a preventative measure to keep the healing process undisturbed without any secondary infection. After care instructions are also available to take with you. You need to make a review appointment after 7-10 days when the remaining stitches will be removed.