



## **WISDOM TEETH**

Most people start noticing their third molars (also called wisdom teeth) when they reach their late teens or early twenties. In many cases, the jaws are not large enough to accommodate these teeth and they remain under the gum tissue (impacted). Frequently there is some pain at this time, although other times, there is no pain at all.

### **What is an impacted tooth?**

When a tooth develops, it travels to its appropriate position in the dental arch. If the path to eruption through the gum is prevented due to the size of the jaw, the tooth will become partially or totally blocked (impacted).

### **How serious is an impacted tooth?**

Serious problems can develop from partially blocked teeth such as an infection, and possible crowding and damage to adjacent teeth. More serious complications can develop when the sac that surrounds the impacted tooth fills with fluid and enlarges to form a cyst, causing an enlargement that hollows out the jaw and results in permanent damage to the adjacent teeth, jawbone and nerves. Left untreated, a tumor may develop from the walls of the cysts and a more complicated surgical procedure would be required for removal.

### **Must the tooth come out if it hasn't caused any problems yet?**

We do not generically recommend that every patient have their wisdom teeth removed. Each case is evaluated on its own merits. But, if it is apparent that your wisdom teeth will not be maintainable and beneficial for you, then, starting at about age 14, "the sooner, the better" we recommend removal. The mid-teen years are an excellent time to perform the procedure as the roots are not fully developed and the bone is somewhat "soft" allowing for a much easier removal of the teeth. Also, young patients tolerate the procedure very well, as opposed to 30+ year olds, who typically have a more prolonged and difficult recovery.

### **Is wisdom tooth (extraction) surgery safe?**

While extraction surgery is routine, like any surgery, there is some risk involved. While serious complications are not expected, those which do occur are most often minor and can be treated readily. Common risks include, but are not limited to: swelling and/or bruising and discomfort in the surgery area, dry sockets, damage to adjacent teeth, numbness or altered sensation in the teeth, lip, tongue and chin and jaw fracture.

Please do not hesitate to ask questions or discuss any concerns you may have with our staff. At 6 Day, your comfort and safety are of utmost importance.

***We require our clinical staff – doctors, hygienists and dental assistants – be certified in CPR annually.***