

Wisdom Teeth FAQ - Removal and Recovery

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Description:

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Details:

Do all wisdom teeth need to be removed?

No. Some people's wisdom teeth come through straight and healthy with enough room in the jaw. If your wisdom teeth are fully erupted, properly positioned, and easy to clean, they may not need to be removed. However, most people do not have enough space, which leads to impaction, crowding, or infection. Your Smile Solutions dentist will assess your specific situation with clinical examination and imaging at Collins Street Imaging on Level 9.

What are the signs my wisdom teeth need removing?

Common signs include pain or tenderness at the back of the jaw, swollen or bleeding gums around the wisdom tooth area, recurring infections (pericoronitis) in the gum tissue over a partially erupted tooth, difficulty opening your mouth, bad breath or an unpleasant taste, and damage to neighbouring teeth. Sometimes wisdom teeth cause problems without obvious symptoms, which is why regular dental check-ups and X-rays are important.

What age should wisdom teeth be removed?

Wisdom teeth typically emerge between ages 17 and 25. Removal is often easier in younger patients (late teens to early twenties) because the roots are not fully formed and the bone is less dense, leading to a smoother extraction and faster recovery. However, wisdom teeth can be removed at any age if they are causing problems.

What is the difference between a simple extraction and surgical removal?

A simple extraction is performed when the wisdom tooth has fully erupted through the gum and can be removed with forceps - similar to any other tooth extraction. Surgical removal is needed when the tooth is impacted (trapped beneath the gum or bone). This involves making a small incision in the gum and sometimes removing a small amount of bone to access the tooth. Smile Solutions' specialist oral surgeons handle both types of extraction.

Should I see a specialist oral surgeon for wisdom teeth removal?

For straightforward erupted wisdom teeth, a general dentist can often perform the extraction. For impacted or complex cases - particularly lower wisdom teeth close to the nerve - a specialist oral surgeon is strongly recommended. Smile Solutions engages specialist oral surgeons with extensive experience in wisdom teeth surgery, providing the highest level of skill and safety.

Can wisdom teeth be removed under general anaesthetic?

Yes. At Smile Solutions, you can choose to have your wisdom teeth removed under local anaesthetic (you are awake but numb), sedation (you are relaxed and drowsy), or general anaesthetic administered by a specialist anaesthetist (you are completely asleep). General anaesthetic is a popular choice for patients having all four wisdom teeth removed at once or for those with dental anxiety.

What does the recovery timeline look like after wisdom teeth removal?

Day 1: Rest, apply ice packs (20 minutes on, 20 minutes off), eat soft cold foods, and take prescribed pain relief. Some bleeding is normal. Day 2 to 3: Swelling typically peaks. Continue soft foods, gentle salt water rinses (starting 24 hours after surgery), and pain management. Day 4 to 7: Swelling and discomfort gradually reduce. Most people return to work or study within 3 to 5 days. Week 2: Most symptoms have resolved. The extraction sites continue healing beneath the surface for several weeks.

What is dry socket and how do I avoid it?

Dry socket occurs when the blood clot that forms in the extraction site is dislodged or dissolves too early, exposing the underlying bone. It causes intense, throbbing pain typically starting 2 to 4 days after surgery. To reduce the risk, avoid sucking through straws, smoking, spitting forcefully, and vigorous rinsing for the first 48 hours. Follow your surgeon's aftercare instructions carefully.

How is pain managed after wisdom teeth removal?

Your surgeon will prescribe appropriate pain relief, which may include anti-inflammatory medication and stronger pain relief if needed. Most patients find that over-the-counter ibuprofen and paracetamol (taken together as directed) manage the discomfort effectively. Ice packs during the first 24 hours also help with both pain and swelling.

How much does wisdom teeth removal cost?

Cost depends on the complexity of the extraction, how many teeth are being removed, and whether sedation or general anaesthetic is used. Simple extractions cost less than surgical removal of impacted teeth. Your Smile Solutions team will provide a detailed quote after your consultation and imaging, so you know exactly what to expect before proceeding.

How long does the actual surgery take?

A single straightforward extraction may take 15 to 20 minutes. Surgical removal of an impacted wisdom tooth typically takes 30 to 45 minutes. If all four wisdom teeth are being removed in one session under general anaesthetic, the procedure usually takes about 45 to 90 minutes. Smile Solutions' specialist oral surgeons perform these procedures regularly, ensuring efficient and careful treatment. Visit directory.smilesolutions.com.au for more information.