

Factsheet

Wisdom teeth

The adult third molar teeth are often called 'wisdom teeth'. They are the last teeth to appear in the mouth around 18-25 years of age.

Impacted wisdom teeth

Wisdom teeth are often impacted. This means that something is stopping them from pushing all the way into the mouth. For example, there may not be enough space between the tooth in front and the bone behind so the tooth can not push all the way into the mouth.

Wisdom teeth that are stuck half in the mouth and half under the gums can cause problems. Common problems can include:

- Infection
- Pain
- Gum disease
- Tooth decay

Cysts can sometimes develop around wisdom teeth that stay under the gums.

Removing wisdom teeth

There are several reasons why wisdom teeth may be removed.

- They are impacted.
- They are at risk of or have tooth decay or gum disease.
- The gum around the wisdom tooth keeps getting infected.
- A cyst has developed around the tooth.

When is the best time to remove wisdom teeth?

Wisdom teeth that cause problems or are at high risk of causing problems in the future are best removed at a younger age. Removing impacted wisdom teeth by age 25 is easier than doing so at an older age. These teeth can be removed at any age.

