



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT WISDOM TEETH

1. WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO HAVE MY WISDOM TEETH REMOVED?

Early, preferably during your teenage years. There is an enormous advantage in removing your wisdom teeth before the roots have had a chance to grow. Your recovery is much quicker, the surgery is technically easier, and the risk of complications is much lower.

2. MY WISDOM TEETH AREN'T BOTHERING ME. WHY SHOULD I HAVE THEM REMOVED?

Your wisdom teeth are not useful teeth. They do not aid in chewing or function. However, they are located in the very back of your jaw, where it is difficult for your toothbrush or floss to reach. This difficulty in hygiene makes the teeth much more susceptible to cavities and infection. When wisdom teeth are removed at a later age, the surgery becomes more difficult and the recovery time is prolonged. We do not believe that if wisdom teeth come in straight and don't bother you, they do not need to be removed. We believe they should be removed as early as possible.

3. HOW LONG IS THE RECOVERY?

Everyone heals differently. Generally, when the wisdom teeth are removed during the teenage years, recovery is usually less than a week. However, when the roots are fully formed with a solid foundation to the jawbone, the recovery is much longer. A broad estimate for recovery time is less than a week if under 20 years old; 1-2 weeks for patients in their early to mid-twenties; and more than 2 weeks for patients older than their late twenties or thirties.

4. WHAT TYPE OF PAIN MEDICINE WILL I NEED?

We recommend two types of medicines following the surgery. The first medicine is prescription strength ibuprofen, which will provide baseline pain relief without the side effects of the stronger narcotics. The second medicine is a strong narcotic, either Vicodin or Percocet. These medicines have many undesirable side effects, and therefore should only be used for breakthrough episodes of discomfort.

5. CAN I BE ASLEEP FOR THE SURGERY?

Yes, and this option is highly recommended, as long as there is no medical condition that would make it unsafe. If you are anxious or apprehensive about the surgery, we have the capability to make sure you are asleep, comfortable, and that you don't recall any part of the surgery. You will likely not remember the Novocaine shot, sounds of the instruments, or pressure from the procedure. If you have had a previous bad experience, or would prefer to not remember any of the surgery, you will find this option appealing.

6. HOW MANY WISDOM TEETH CAN I REMOVE AT ONE TIME?

It depends on the difficulty of the procedure. When removing wisdom teeth in younger patients, we generally recommend removing all four at the same time while the patient is asleep. However, at more advanced ages, when there is potential for increased difficulty, we sometimes recommend treating one side of the mouth at a time. For example, the upper and lower wisdom teeth on the right side would be removed first, followed by the removal of the upper and lower wisdom teeth on the left side after the right side has fully healed.