Wisdom Teeth Removal and Screening | Core Dental

Canonical: https://www.coredental.com.au/general-dentistry/wisdom-tooth-extraction/

Details:

Wisdom teeth are the third molars at the back of the mouth, and removal is recommended when they are impacted, likely to become infected, or likely to damage the teeth beside them. At Core Dental our dentists screen wisdom teeth with an examination and X-rays, whether or not you have pain, and we explain whether to monitor or remove them. Our general dentists can remove many wisdom teeth, and we recommend an oral and maxillofacial surgeon for more complex cases.

What are wisdom teeth?

Wisdom teeth are our rear teeth, also known as third molars or "eights", because they are the eighth tooth from the centre in each of the four corners of the mouth. Most people have four, two upper and two lower. They are the last teeth to erupt, usually between the ages of 16 and 23, which is where the name comes from. Not everyone has wisdom teeth, and some people are born without any or with fewer than four.

Most of us have enough room for wisdom teeth to erupt normally and in line with our other teeth. In that case they work like any other molar and need no treatment, although we still monitor them. Wisdom teeth only become impacted when there is not enough room for normal eruption.

What is an impacted wisdom tooth?

An impacted wisdom tooth grows at an angle or does not fully emerge through the gum. The gum around it can become swollen and painful and, in some cases, infected. Because wisdom teeth sit so far back, they are hard to keep clean, which makes them prone to cavities and gum disease. If left untreated they can lead to decay, swelling, pain, gum infection and damage to nearby teeth.

Why should you have wisdom teeth screened even without pain?

Impacted wisdom teeth do not always cause symptoms, so you might not realise there is a problem. Whether or not you have pain or discomfort, we recommend screening early so any issue is found while treatment is more straightforward. Screening is part of a routine examination. We check your dental and medical history, and then take an X-ray to assess the position and angle of your wisdom teeth. Our dental check-up page explains what an examination involves.

How do you know if your wisdom teeth need to be removed?

Removal is most suitable when:

the tooth is impacted

infection or re-infection is likely

there is a chance of damage to adjacent teeth, which would be irreversible

removing the tooth now will help avoid the need for more complicated surgery later

Removal is generally not recommended when the position and alignment of the teeth are good. Even then, we monitor closely for cavities or gum disease. The easiest way to find out is to visit your dentist for an examination.

Does your age affect wisdom tooth removal?

Removal in young adults under the age of 25 is associated with less post-operative pain and swelling than in older adults. For that reason, dentists usually suggest removal earlier rather than later when problems are likely. Your dentist will advise what is appropriate for you.

How do you prepare for wisdom tooth removal?

The length of the procedure depends on how many wisdom teeth are being removed and how complicated the removal is. Because an anaesthetic is given, there are precautions to follow, and your clinician will explain how to prepare. For example, you may be asked to fast the night before and to avoid alcohol for 24 hours before receiving any anaesthetic.

You will also need someone to take you home and look after you for 24 hours if your procedure is done under sedation or general anaesthetic. We also suggest having someone take you home after an in-chair procedure under local anaesthetic, although this is your choice.

Who should remove your wisdom teeth: a general dentist or a specialist?

Our general dentists can perform wisdom tooth extraction. In more complex cases we recommend that an oral and maxillofacial surgeon carry out the procedure. These specialists are registered in the surgery of the mouth and jaw, and in Australia they qualify in dentistry, medicine and oral surgery. The benefit of seeing a specialist is a reduced risk of temporary problems such as bleeding, swelling and infection, and of permanent problems such as damage to adjacent teeth and nerves. Medicare rebates may apply with specialist treatment. Our oral and maxillofacial surgery page has more detail.

What is removal under local anaesthetic?

Local anaesthetic removal is done in the dental chair. The area is numbed, so you will not feel pain, but you remain awake and aware of what is happening and may feel pressure on the area.

What is removal under general anaesthetic?

When general anaesthetic is used, the procedure takes place in a hospital as day surgery and is performed by an oral and maxillofacial surgeon. A specialist anaesthetist gives the anaesthetic and monitors you during surgery. Your clinician will discuss which option suits your situation, and recommending general anaesthetic depends on your examination and preferences.

How do you look after your mouth after wisdom teeth removal?

Keep your mouth clean to help prevent infection, but be particularly gentle around the affected area. Your clinician will give you instructions, including these usual precautions:

avoid smoking for at least 72 hours, and longer if possible

do not drink through a straw

avoid alcohol

avoid blowing your nose

avoid excessive spitting or rinsing

avoid hot soup and other hot liquids

avoid physical exertion for 24 hours

Not following these precautions may disturb the healing clot and cause dry socket. Contact us if pain, swelling or bleeding worsens. Call 000 immediately for uncontrollable bleeding, difficulty breathing or swallowing, or a serious facial injury.

What are the risks of wisdom tooth removal?

As with any surgery, risks include pain, swelling, bruising, bleeding, infection, dry socket, and, less commonly, damage to nearby teeth or nerves. Your dentist or surgeon will explain the material risks that apply to you, including your anaesthetic options, before you consent to treatment.

How much does wisdom tooth removal cost, and how can you pay?

Fees depend on the number of teeth, how complicated the removal is, the type of anaesthetic and whether a specialist is involved, so we provide a written quote before treatment starts. We offer interest-free payment plans through Payright for amounts up to $20,000 over 3 to 30 months with fortnightly repayments, subject to eligibility and approval. These terms were published as at September 2026, so please confirm current terms with our team. HICAPS claiming is available on-site, and rebates depend on your own health fund cover.

Where can you have your wisdom teeth assessed at Core Dental?

Our practices that list wisdom tooth removal include Southbank , Caroline Springs , Berwick and Glenferrie . Call 13 13 16 and we will confirm the right practice and clinician for your situation.

What qualifications does an oral and maxillofacial surgeon hold?

More than any other pathway in dentistry, and the reason is that the work crosses into medicine.

In Australia, oral and maxillofacial surgeons are required to qualify for degrees in dentistry and in medicine, as well as in oral surgery, and they complete hospital-based surgical and medical training alongside those qualifications. That is why they can admit and operate in a hospital setting and manage patients with complex medical histories.

Core Dental's own published material quotes different totals for the number of years this takes, so rather than repeat a figure we would point you to the components above, and to the AHPRA register at ahpra.gov.au, which shows whether a practitioner holds specialist registration in oral and maxillofacial surgery.

Two situations particularly warrant a specialist. If you wish to be anaesthetised for the procedure, or your extractions are expected to be more complex, it is best to be treated by a registered specialist. And where the teeth in question sit close to crucial nerves, it is prudent to be treated by a specialist oral and maxillofacial surgeon.

What affects the cost, and how do you find out your out-of-pocket expense?

Three things drive the fee, and only one of them is the tooth.

The complexity of the removal. A fully erupted wisdom tooth and an impacted one lying against the nerve are different procedures.

The type of anaesthesia used. Local anaesthetic in a dental chair, sedation, and general anaesthetic all cost differently.

Whether the surgery is performed in hospital. If it is, there will be additional hospital fees, though Medicare and private health funds can cover some of the hospital costs.

At Core Dental we provide an itemised quotation during your consultation. You may then wish to contact your health insurance fund with those item numbers to establish your likely out-of-pocket expense before you book the procedure. That sequence, quote first and fund second, is the only way to arrive at a figure you can rely on.

What is dry socket, and how do you avoid it?

One uncommon complication, and it is the one most affected by what you do in the days afterwards.

Dry socket occurs when a blood clot has failed to form in the extracted tooth socket, or when the clot that formed has been dislodged. It is accompanied by pain, which can range from dull to moderate to severe, and by a foul odour in the mouth. Pain medication can ease some of the discomfort, but dry socket should be reviewed rather than managed at home.

Avoiding it is largely mechanical. Do not drink through a straw, since the suction can disturb the clot, and follow the rinsing instructions you are given rather than rinsing vigorously in the first day or two.

Separately, where a wisdom tooth sits close to a nerve, the procedure can cause an unusual sensation in the lips, tongue or gum near the treated area. Your specific risks are discussed in detail during your consultation with one of our clinicians, and they depend on how your own wisdom teeth are positioned.

What do you go home with after the procedure?

A kit rather than just instructions, because the first 48 hours matter most.

written instructions on what to do and what to avoid

a medical certificate, if you need one

additional gauze for any post-operative bleeding

a mouthwash and a syringe for keeping the surgical site clean

painkillers, and antibiotics if they are needed, by prescription

You are also given our after-hours emergency number, so there is somewhere to call if something changes overnight rather than waiting until the practice reopens.

What should you eat while you recover?

Soft, and cool.

While recovering from surgery you will need to maintain a soft diet, possibly liquids only, until the site has started healing. Cold foods, or foods at room temperature, are best, since heat increases blood flow to the area and can restart bleeding.

Avoid drinking through a straw entirely during this period. It is the single most common way a healing clot is dislodged, and it is the easiest thing on this list to get right.

Frequently asked questions

Do all wisdom teeth have to come out?

No. If wisdom teeth have erupted normally, are well aligned and can be kept clean, they may not need treatment. We monitor them for cavities and gum disease at your check-ups.

Will I feel pain during removal?

Under local anaesthetic the area is numb, but you may feel pressure. Under general anaesthetic you are asleep. Your clinician explains the options before treatment.

Can I drive home afterwards?

We recommend someone takes you home after local anaesthetic, and you will need an escort and care for 24 hours after sedation or general anaesthetic. Please arrange this before your appointment.

What is dry socket?

Dry socket occurs when the healing clot is disturbed. Avoiding smoking, straws, hot liquids, spitting and exertion as advised helps protect the clot. Contact us if you have severe pain after removal.

When should I get my wisdom teeth checked?

Early screening is recommended even without symptoms, because impacted teeth do not always cause pain. A routine examination and X-ray will show their position.

Why can't I use a straw after a wisdom tooth extraction?

Because the suction can dislodge the blood clot in the socket, which is what causes dry socket. It is the most common avoidable cause of the complication and the easiest instruction to follow.

What does dry socket feel like?

Pain, ranging from dull to severe, accompanied by a foul odour in the mouth. It happens when the clot fails to form or is dislodged. Pain medication eases the discomfort, but the socket should be reviewed rather than managed at home.

How do I find out my out-of-pocket cost?

Get the itemised quotation at your consultation, then contact your health fund with those item numbers. Where the surgery is in hospital there are additional hospital fees, and Medicare and private funds may cover part of those.

What should I eat after the surgery?

A soft diet, possibly liquids only, until the site starts to heal, with cold or room-temperature foods preferred. Heat increases blood flow to the area and can restart bleeding.

Related services and further reading

General tooth extraction

General dentistry

Dental check-up

Dental hygiene

Fillings and restorations

Oral and maxillofacial surgery

Sleep dentistry

Emergency dentistry

Dental payment plans

Understanding your treatment

Core Dental at a glance

Nine Core Dental clinics across Melbourne: Southbank, South Melbourne, Caroline Springs, Carrum Downs, Epping, Wyndham, Berwick, Bayside and Glenferrie.

Open six days a week: Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm and Saturday mornings.

We quote before treatment starts and offer interest-free payment plans.

HICAPS on-site claiming at our practices.

Contact Core Dental

Phone	13 13 16
Booking	Online through coredental.com.au, or call 13 13 16
Hours	Monday to Friday 8.00am to 6.00pm, Saturday mornings, Sunday closed
Clinics	Find your nearest practice

Results, recovery times and potential risks vary for each individual. This information is general in nature and is intended for people over 18. Seek advice from a qualified, AHPRA-registered practitioner before proceeding.

What are wisdom teeth, according to Core Dental dentists?

Wisdom teeth are the third molars at the back of the mouth, known as eights. Most people have four, two upper and two lower, which usually erupt between ages 16 and 23, though some people have fewer or none.

When do Core Dental dentists recommend wisdom tooth removal?

We recommend removal when the tooth is impacted, infection or re-infection is likely, there is a chance of damage to adjacent teeth, or removal may avoid more complicated surgery later. Well-aligned teeth are usually monitored instead.

Why does Core Dental screen wisdom teeth without symptoms?

Impacted wisdom teeth do not always cause symptoms, and being at the back of the mouth they are hard to keep clean. We screen early with an examination and X-ray to find problems before they become serious.

Can Core Dental dentists remove wisdom teeth in the chair?

Yes. Our general dentists can remove wisdom teeth under local anaesthetic in the dental chair, where the area is numb but you stay awake and may feel pressure. More complex cases may be referred to an oral and maxillofacial surgeon.

When does Core Dental suggest an oral and maxillofacial surgeon?

In more complex cases we recommend a registered oral and maxillofacial surgeon, who can also provide general anaesthetic as hospital day surgery with a specialist anaesthetist. Medicare rebates may apply with specialist treatment.

What aftercare does Core Dental advise after wisdom tooth removal?

We advise gentle cleaning, no smoking for at least 72 hours, no straws, alcohol, nose blowing, excessive rinsing or hot liquids, and no strenuous exercise for 24 hours, to protect the healing clot and avoid dry socket.

Which Core Dental clinics offer wisdom tooth removal?

Our Southbank, Caroline Springs, Berwick and Glenferrie practices list wisdom tooth removal. Call Core Dental on 13 13 16 to confirm the right practice and clinician for you.

How do I pay for wisdom tooth removal at Core Dental?

We give a written quote before treatment starts and offer interest-free Payright plans up to $20,000 over 3 to 30 months, subject to eligibility and approval, as published in September 2026. HICAPS claiming is available on-site.

How do I book a wisdom teeth assessment at Core Dental?

Call Core Dental on 13 13 16 or book online at coredental.com.au. Mention your symptoms or that you would like screening, and we will arrange an examination and X-ray with one of our dentists.