

## Complex Wisdom Tooth Extraction

### What is a Complex Wisdom Tooth Extraction?

Wisdom teeth are the final teeth to erupt, usually not coming through until we are in our late teens or early twenties. Most people have one wisdom tooth at the back of each corner of their mouth and are the most common variety of teeth to be removed as there is often little space left for them to erupt.

Not all wisdom tooth extractions are as straightforward as simply removing the tooth from the socket. Some are more complex. A complex wisdom tooth extraction is an extraction during which the tissue and bone that supports the tooth need to be modified in some way. This could mean cutting the gum tissue in order to expose and remove the tooth or removing bone in order to free the tooth so that it can be extracted.

### Why might I need a Complex Wisdom Tooth Extractions?

A complex extraction is needed where the tooth cannot simply be removed in an upright position. Unfortunately, it's not always known whether extraction of a wisdom tooth will be straightforward at the time of beginning the procedure. A simple wisdom tooth extraction may end up being complex – for example, if the tooth breaks and part of the root becomes left in the jaw.

Wisdom teeth are often removed as the lack of space can cause them to become impacted, infected and therefore problematic. Other reasons for the removal of wisdom teeth are due to them causing:

- [Pericoronitis](#) (Inflammation of the gums overlying the partially erupted wisdom tooth).
- Resorption of the tooth in front of the wisdom tooth.
- Dental decay.
- Jaw pain.

Since we don't need our wisdom teeth, many dentists recommend that people who experience problems with them should have them removed. However, since they are very large and the last to come through, wisdom teeth are highly likely to be considered a complex dental extraction.

### What happens during a wisdom tooth extraction?

This procedure requires an incision to remove the problematic tooth and usually requires general anaesthesia and the skill of a [oral and maxillofacial surgeon](#).

### What to expect after a complex wisdom tooth extraction?

It can take up to 2 weeks to recover from the surgery after having your wisdom tooth or teeth removed. During this time, you may have:

- A swollen mouth and cheeks – this will be worse for the first few days but will gradually improve.
- Some mild visible bruising of your cheek – the skin may be bruised for up to 2 weeks.
- A stiff, sore jaw – this should wear off within 7 to 10 days.

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- Pain – this is worse if the extraction was difficult or complicated.
- An unpleasant taste in your mouth.
- Tingling or numbness of your face, lips or tongue (although this is uncommon).

Report any excess bleeding, severe pain or any other unusual symptoms to your dentist or oral surgeon immediately.

## Pain Relief during procedure

To control pain, anaesthesia options will be discussed by your dental specialist. Your dental care team will instruct you about eating and drinking before surgery. You can drive immediately after the procedure if [local anaesthetic](#) was used, but you should avoid driving for at least 24 hours if a sedative was used, or 48 hours if the procedure was carried out under [general anaesthetic](#). Plan to have someone take you home after surgery and expect to rest for the remainder of the day.

## What are the risks of a complex wisdom tooth extraction?

Most wisdom tooth extractions don't result in long-term complications. Rarely, complications can include:

- Painful dry socket, or exposure of bone when the post-surgical blood clot is lost from the site of the surgical wound (socket).
- Infection in the socket from bacteria or trapped food particles.
- Damage to nearby teeth, nerves, jawbone or sinuses.

## After treatment plan

To reduce pain and aid your recovery, it may help to:

- Use painkillers such as [paracetamol](#) or [ibuprofen](#) (always read and follow the manufacturer's dosage instructions).
- Gently pressing a cold cloth to your face helps reduce the swelling.
- Avoid strenuous activity and exercise for a few days.
- Use an extra pillow to support your head at night.
- For 24 hours, avoid rinsing, spitting, hot drinks or anything else that may dislodge the blood clots that form in the empty tooth socket (they help the healing process).
- Avoid smoking and drinking alcohol for 24 hours.
- Eat soft or liquid food for a few days and chew with your other teeth.
- Gently rinse the extraction site with antiseptic mouthwash after 24 hours, and repeat this regularly over the next few days, particularly after eating – you can also use warm water with a teaspoon of salt as mouthwash to reduce gum soreness and inflammation.
- It is usually recommended that you take a day or two off work after having a wisdom tooth removed. You won't need a sick note from your doctor or dentist for this.

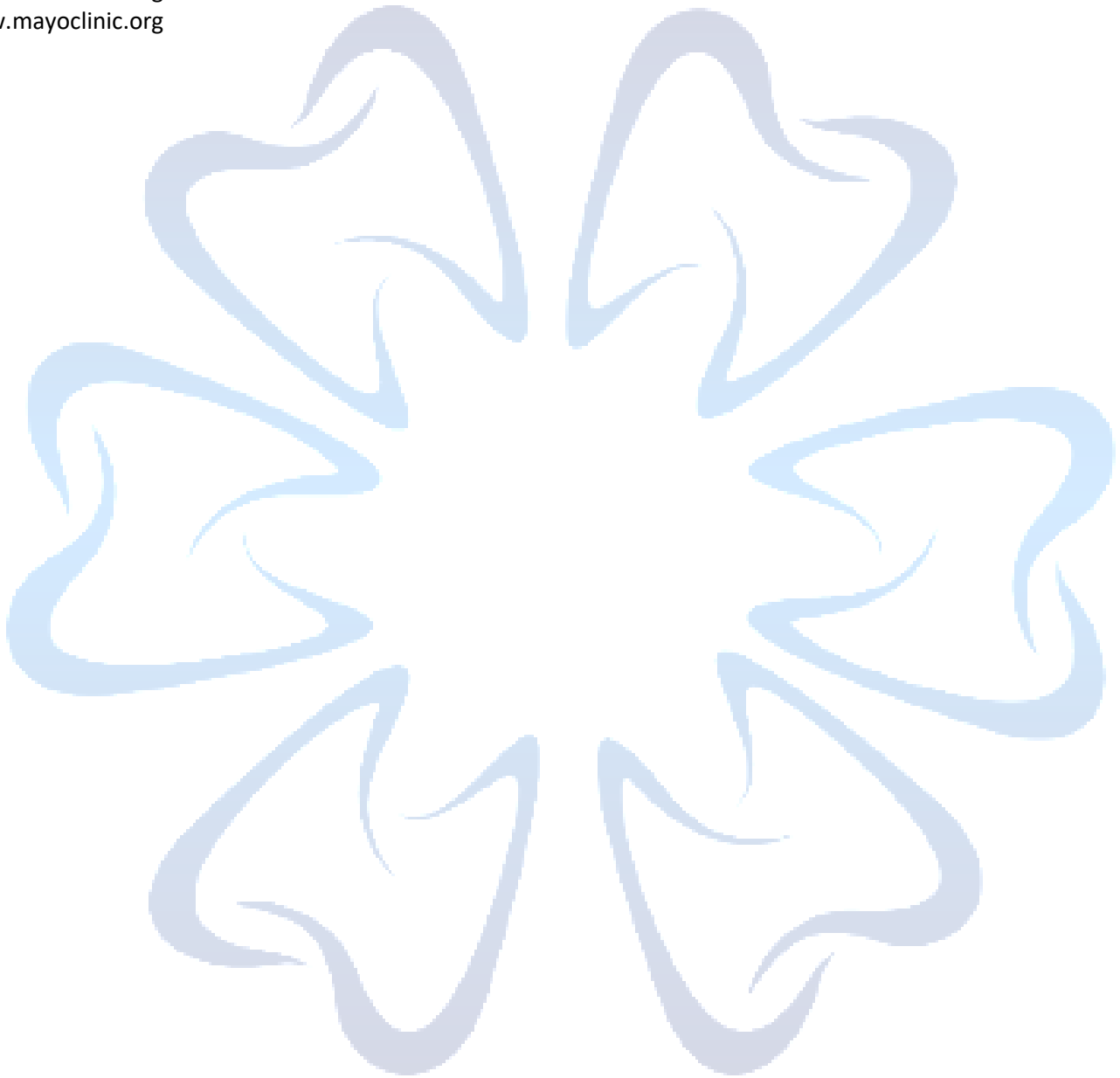
After your wisdom teeth have been removed and any swelling and bruising has disappeared, your mouth and face should return to normal. You'll usually be able to brush your teeth normally after a few days. Make sure you finish

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any course of [antibiotics](#) you've been given. A check-up appointment may be arranged for about a week or so after the procedure. At this point, any remaining stitches may be removed.

**Sources**

[www.healthdirect.gov.au](http://www.healthdirect.gov.au)  
[www.mayoclinic.org](http://www.mayoclinic.org)



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