

## Removal of impacted wisdom teeth

### Patient information

Southport Hospital  
Town Lane,  
Kew,  
Southport,  
Merseyside,  
PR8 6PN  
Telephone:  
01704 547 471

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Dicconson Way,  
Wigan Road,  
Ormskirk,  
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L39 2AZ  
Telephone:  
01695 577 111

If you need this leaflet in a different language or accessible format  
please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you.

اگر به این بروشور به زبان دیگر یا در قالب دسترس پذیر نیاز دارید،  
لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Jeśli niniejsza ulotka ma być dostępna w innym języku lub formie,  
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إذا احتجت إلى هذه النشرة بلغة أخرى، أو بتنسيق  
يسهل الوصول إليه، يرجى التحدث إلى أحد الموظفين لترتيب ذلك لك.

## Removal of impacted wisdom teeth

This leaflet is for patients who may need to have an operation to remove their impacted wisdom teeth. It explains why they may need to be removed, what is involved and any risks or complications that there may be. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer or would like further explanation please ask.

### The problem

The wisdom tooth (or third molar) is usually the last tooth to erupt into the mouth normally after about 16 years of age. Frequently, there is not enough room to accommodate wisdom teeth and as such they do not come into the mouth properly. Wisdom teeth are usually either impacted forwards into the tooth in front or backwards into the jaw bone, when this happens the wisdom teeth are said to be “impacted” often causing problems resulting in the tooth needing to be removed.

### Why do I need treatment?

An impacted wisdom tooth can cause a number of problems that means the tooth is best removed.

Most commonly these are:

- Repeated attacks of infection in the gum surrounding the tooth. This leads to pain and swelling.
- Food packing which causes decay in either the wisdom tooth or the tooth in front.
- Cysts can form around the wisdom tooth if it does not come into the mouth properly. A cyst occurs when fluid fills the sack that normally surrounds a developing wisdom tooth.

Please call 01704 704714 if you need this leaflet in an alternative format

### For appointments

Telephone:  
01695 656 680

Email:  
[soh-tr.appointments@merseywestlancs.nhs.uk](mailto:soh-tr.appointments@merseywestlancs.nhs.uk)

## Special instructions

If anything is required specific to your treatment it will be discussed with you on the day of your consultation.

## Other useful telephone numbers and contacts:

NHS 111

Stop Smoking Helpline  
(Sefton)  
0300 100 1000

Stop Smoking Helpline  
(West Lancashire)  
0800 328 6297

## What does the treatment involve?

Because the wisdom tooth has not fully erupted into the mouth it is often necessary to make a cut in the gum over the tooth. Sometimes it is also necessary to remove some bone surrounding the crown of the wisdom tooth using a surgical drill and saline solution. In some cases the tooth needs to be cut into 2 or 3 pieces to remove it. Once the wisdom tooth has been removed the gum is put back into place with stitches. In the majority of cases these stitches are dissolvable and take around two weeks to disappear.

## What type of anaesthetic is used?

A number of options are available and your oral surgeon will discuss with you which method is most appropriate. The degree of difficulty of the surgery, any underlying medical conditions and other personal circumstances will be taken into account when choosing the method.

## Local anaesthetic

This is an injection into the gum surrounding the wisdom tooth, rather similar to that you may have had at your dentist for a filling. The injection takes a couple of minutes to numb the area and means that you will feel no pain while the wisdom tooth is removed. This is the best option for wisdom teeth that are simple to remove. From time to time patients may experience a feeling of palpitations or their heart 'racing'. This is due to the adrenaline in the injection, however this feeling passes in a few moments.

## General anaesthetic

It is usually possible to remove wisdom teeth under a "day case" general anaesthetic, although you are put to sleep completely you will be able to go home on the same day as surgery

## What preparation do you need to do?

This will depend on the choice of anaesthetic:

- Local anaesthetic - it is important to have a light meal up to 2 hours before your treatment. You can drink fluids and take any medicines as normal unless you have been instructed otherwise.
- Do not drink any alcohol. You can drive yourself home if you feel safe to do so. If you are particularly nervous it is advisable to bring someone with you to drive you home or escort you on public transport.
- General anaesthetic- this would be carried out at Aintree Hospital and when you have your pre operation appointment all details will be discussed with you by the surgeon and specialist nurse.

## What will happen when you arrive into hospital?

Local anaesthetic. Once you have booked in at the reception desk, the nurses will introduce themselves and the team who will be treating you. There will be 2 nurses and 1 oral surgeon with you during the procedure.

Before the procedure takes place the surgeon will take an up to date medical history and a consent form will need to be signed in addition to the one you signed at your consultation appointment.

At the end of the procedure a post-operative instruction pack will be given to you to take home to include direct numbers and emergency numbers. Once the procedure has been completed you will be free to go home as long as you feel well enough to do so.

During your contact with us, it is important that you are happy with your care and treatment. Please speak to a member of staff on the ward, or department sister if you have questions or concerns.

## Matron

A matron is also available during the hours of 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday. During these periods, ward or department staff can contact matron to arrange to meet with you.

Out of hours, a senior nurse can be contacted via the ward or department to deal with any concerns you may have.

## Infection control request

Preventing infections is a crucial part of our patients' care. To ensure that our standards remain high our staff have regular infection prevention and control training and their practice is monitored in the workplace.

We ask patients and visitors to assist us in preventing infections by cleaning their hands at regular intervals and informing staff of areas within the hospital that appear soiled.

As a patient there may be times that you are unsure whether a staff member has cleaned their hands. If in doubt please ask the staff member and they will be only too happy to put your mind at ease by cleaning their hands again so that you can see them carry out this task.

About one in ten people will have some tingling or numbness that can last several weeks. Less than one in one hundred people will have problems that last more than a year. These risks may be higher if your tooth is in a difficult position. The surgeon will tell you if you are considered to be at an increased risk.

### **Will I need another appointment?**

Usually a review appointment is not necessary; however this will be decided on the day by the surgeon.

### **Who to contact if you have any further questions or concerns**

If you are worried or have any questions then please do not hesitate to contact the department and speak to one of the nursing team:

Maxillofacial Unit Office:  
01695 656 966

Reception:  
01695 656 334

Your own dental practitioner.

- General anaesthetic. This would be carried out at Aintree Hospital and when you have your pre operation appointment all the details will be discussed with you by the surgeon and specialist nurse.

### **How long does it take to remove a wisdom tooth and what can you expect to feel?**

This is a variable. Some wisdom teeth may take only a few minutes to remove.

More difficult wisdom teeth that need to be cut into pieces to remove can take around 30 minutes or more. We allocate 45 minutes per patient for their appointment and we try to keep waiting times down to a minimum, however please take into consideration that circumstances occur out of our control which causes delays.

We would therefore advise to keep the morning or afternoon free for your appointment.

Depending on the choice of anaesthetic you would expect to feel the following:

Local anaesthetic - once you have had the injection the area will become numb. The surgeon will test the area to ensure you do not feel anything sharp. Pressure, movement and an awareness of what is going on is to be expected.

General anaesthetic -you will be asleep for the duration of the procedure and in most cases you will be allowed to go home the same day. You will need a responsible adult (friend or relative) to drive you home afterwards.

## What can I expect after the procedure?

You need to be careful not to bite the area whilst you are numb and to avoid hot food and drink until the anaesthetic has worn off. It is likely that there will be some discomfort and swelling both on the inside and outside of your mouth after surgery. This is usually worse for the first three days but it may take up to two weeks before all the soreness goes.

Painkillers that do not contain aspirin, for example paracetamol and ibuprofen are helpful to reduce swelling and pain. If you are unable to take these due to medical reasons advise the surgeon who will be able to provide an alternative.

You may also find that your jaw is stiff and you may need to eat a soft diet for a week or so. There may be some bruising of the skin of your face that can take up to a fortnight to fade away.

## Is there anything else I need to do after the extractions?

It is important to keep the extraction site as clean as possible for the first few weeks after surgery.

It may be difficult to clean your teeth around the site of the extraction but it is important you brush gently and to keep the area free from food debris by gently rinsing with warm salt water (dissolve a flat teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water) 24 hours after your surgery, 3-4 times per day especially after food for 10-14 days.

## Do I need to take any time off work?

Usually it will be necessary to take a few days off work and avoid strenuous exercise for this time. Depending on the type of anaesthetic used you may well not be able to drive (48 hours after a general anaesthetic).

## What are the possible problems?

Although there may be a little bleeding at the time of the extraction this usually stops very quickly and is unlikely to be a problem if the wound is stitched. Should the area bleed again when you get home, this can usually be stopped by applying pressure over the area for at least 10 minutes with a damp rolled up swab. If the bleeding does not stop, please contact the department.

If the blood clot inside the socket where the tooth used to be is lost then what is known as a "Dry socket" can occur. This is very painful and will require you to attend the department, or your own dentist, for the socket to be rinsed out with saline and packed with a special antiseptic dressing.

There are two nerves that lie very close to the roots of the lower wisdom teeth. One of these nerves supplies feeling to your lower lip, chin and lower teeth. The other supplies feeling to your tongue and helps with taste. Sometimes these nerves may be bruised when a wisdom tooth is taken out. This can cause tingling or numbness in your lip, chin or tongue, and more rarely altered taste.