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## **Impacted Teeth – General Information**

### **Impacted Teeth**

Impacted teeth are teeth that have failed to come into the mouth normally. Third molars (Wisdom Teeth) are the last teeth to develop and most frequently become trapped and fail to erupt.

### **Why Should Impacted Teeth Be Removed?**

Most of the time impacted teeth cause symptoms ranging from teething pain to severe pain, swelling and stiffness of the jaws. Usually these symptoms are the result of an infection, which is caused by the presence of impacted teeth in the area. Once these symptoms start occurring it is likely that they will keep coming back in the future. Occasionally infections from wisdom teeth can spread to the throat, cheeks or down the neck sometimes requiring hospitalization and surgery for treatment.

Other problems potentially associated with impacted wisdom teeth are the development of cysts, tumours, or damage to the adjacent teeth. These problems and associated potential risks make it advisable to have impacted teeth removed surgically.

Your Oral and Maxillofacial surgeon will be able to discuss these risks in more depth should you have any questions.

### **When Should Impacted Teeth Be Removed?**

Late teens or early twenties is the ideal time for wisdom teeth removal. By this time the teeth are developed sufficiently to determine if they are impacted and will not erupt. Surgery at this time is generally less complicated and healing proceeds faster. Due to these facts we believe that the “Wait till they bother me” attitude is incorrect and potentially dangerous.

### **Anaesthesia**

We generally recommend that the surgery for difficult extractions or the removal of impacted teeth is done under deep sedation. This approach provides a comfortable pain free operation. If you have any questions about your anaesthesia we will be glad to discuss them with you. To be able to have deep sedation you must have nothing to eat or drink for the 6 hours prior to your surgery. Following your surgery you must arrange for a responsible adult to take you home and stay with you for 3 or 4 hours.