

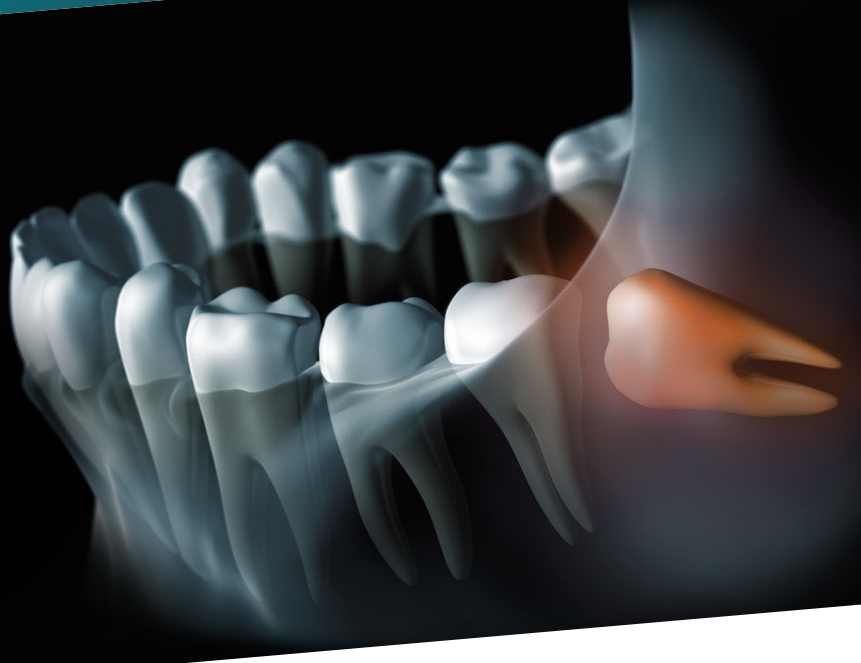


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## DENTAL MEDICINE

# WISDOM TEETH



### What are wisdom teeth?

Wisdom teeth are the last molars on either side of the jaws and they usually erupt between the ages of 16 and 20. Since they are the last permanent teeth to erupt, in many cases the amount of available space for that eruption is limited so they eventually become totally or partially impacted.

### Do all people have wisdom teeth?

No, not all. There are those who have none, and there are those who have one, two, three or four wisdom teeth. This can be easily diagnosed using a very simple radiographic exam - Orthopantomography.

### Should all wisdom teeth be extracted?

No. If they are well placed in the arch, don't have any problems (caries, pericoronitis ...) and aren't causing any harm to the neighboring teeth, there should be no indication for them to be extracted.

However, due to incorrect positioning in the jaws and because they are difficult to sanitize in the day-to-day, these teeth are frequently associated with caries, abscesses, cysts and pericoronitis, which often forces them to be extracted. If the wisdom teeth don't have any problems but the Dentist anticipates that they will soon have or that they will cause problems in the neighboring teeth, they should also be extracted preventively.

### What care should be taken after the extraction of a wisdom tooth?

It is very important to follow the doctor's instructions carefully after the extraction of one or more wisdom teeth. There should be several periods of ice on the face during the first 48 to 72 hours in order to avoid considerable swelling; the patient should ingest only food and beverages either cold or at room temperature and he should avoid hard food products that may cause pain while chewing; the patient should also avoid physical exertion, sports and sun exposure for at least the first 3 or 4 days; he should not smoke and he should comply with the medication prescribed by the Dentist, which may include antibiotics, corticosteroids, non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, analgesics and oral antiseptic.