

# *Oyster Point Oral & Facial Surgery*

*N. Ray Lee, D.D.S.*

## **INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS SCHEDULED FOR REMOVAL OF IMPACTED TEETH**

Most people start getting their third molars (also called wisdom teeth) when they reach their teens or early twenties. In many cases, the jaws are not large enough to accommodate these teeth and they remain under the gum (impacted). Other teeth may also be impacted because of dental crowding of jaw size.

### *What is an Impacted Tooth?*

When a tooth develops, it travels to its appropriate position in the dental arch. If the path to eruption through the gum is prevented due to the size of the jaw, or dental crowding, the tooth will become partially or totally blocked (impacted).

### *How serious is an Impacted Tooth?*

Serious problems can develop from partially blocked teeth such as infection, and possible crowding of and damage to adjacent teeth. More serious complications can develop when the sac that surrounds the impacted tooth fills with fluid and enlarges to form a cyst, causing an enlargement that hollows out the jaw and results in permanent damage to the adjacent teeth, jawbone, and nerves. Left untreated, a tumor may develop from the walls of these cysts and a more complicated surgical procedure would be required for removal.

### *Must the tooth come out if it hasn't caused any problems?*

No one can tell you when your impacted tooth will cause trouble, but trouble will probably arise. When it does, the circumstances can be much more painful and the teeth can be complicated to treat. Therefore, we often recommend removal of impacted teeth before they become infected or develop cysts or tumors.

### *When should I have my Impacted Teeth removed?*

The key to timely attention to third molars is regular x-rays of the mouth. With the help of these pictures the oral surgeon can frequently predict if the wisdom teeth are going to cause trouble, either in the near future or later in life. If so, chances are the oral surgeon will recommend their removal rather than wait for trouble to occur.

Removal is easier in younger patients. Roots are not fully developed and the bone is less dense. In older patients, removal before complications develop is key to a shorter recovery and healing time and minimizing discomfort after surgery.

### *What are the most common problems?*

- A. **Discomfort** – discomfort is usually most severe the first 12-24 hours, and may require prescription pain medications. Persistent soreness is often present for several more days. This is usually controlled by Motrin or Ibuprofen type medications.
- B. **Swelling** – Swelling is usually worse on one side than the other and takes about 48 hours to reach its maximum. The swelling usually subsides over the next week.
- C. **Decreased Mouth Opening** – Because there has been surgery involving the muscles, they often become stiff and limit the amount of mouth opening for several days.
- D. **Bleeding** – Some bleeding is normal for up to 48 hours. There may be slight bleeding from the area when you brush your teeth for the first week. Unless it is uncontrollable, it is of no concern.
- E. **Infection** – infections are extremely rare during the first few days after surgery. If an infection does occur, it is more likely 4-8 weeks after surgery. Treatment is usually simple, but you should see your surgeon.
- F. **Dry Sockets** – If the blood clot breaks down prematurely several days after surgery, the result may be increased discomfort. Although not a serious medical problem, patients are more comfortable if dressings are placed in the areas involved.
- G. **Numbness** – There may be injury to the nerves in the area resulting in numbness of the lip, chin, tongue, and/or teeth. This is usually temporary, but may be permanent. If it occurs, let the surgeon know when you see him post-operatively.

***If General Anesthesia is planned, there should be NO food or liquid 8 hours prior to surgery, a responsible party must be IN the office the entire time of the surgery.***

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL (757) 596-1200



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## *Instructions To Patients Scheduled For General Anesthesia*

1. **Do Not** eat or drink anything, including water, gum or lozenges for at least 8 hours prior to surgery. You may brush your teeth and take necessary medications with only a sip of water, **if approved by doctor.**
2. Come with a responsible person who will be able to drive you home. **This person should be able to remain in the facility while you are having your surgery. You will not be allowed to leave the office unaccompanied.**
3. Wear loose clothing with sleeves that can be easily pulled up or rolled past the elbow.
4. Wear flat shoes. No heels.
5. It is preferable not to wear any fingernail polish. Do not wear fingernail polish that is extremely dark or has metallic elements.
6. Do not wear any neck or ear jewelry.
7. If you develop a sore throat, fever, cold, or other illness before your appointment, be sure to call see if it is desirable for you to postpone your surgery.

***If you eat within the 8 hours prior to your appointment, or do not have a responsible party that can remain in the facility during your appointment – then you will have to reschedule your appointment, until those arrangements can be made!***

*If you have any questions, please call  
596-1200*

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## ***Post Operative Instructions***

Keep the pressure gauze firmly in place for 1-2 hours (remove gauze before eating or drinking and then replace). Then remove and discard it after the 1-2 hour time frame. In order to minimize bleeding, do not drink through a straw or smoke for 24 hours.

If pain medications and/or antibiotics have been prescribed, they should be taken as soon as you get home. The antibiotics (if any) should be continued until finished. Narcotic pain medications are generally necessary only for the first 12-24 hours; then switch to Ibuprofen or Motrin every 3-4 hours as needed. If the narcotics continue to be necessary, there is no harm in continuing them as prescribed.

It is important that you continue to receive nourishment. Unless otherwise instructed, it is usually more comfortable to limit the diet to cold soft foods during the first 12-24 hours. Resume a regular diet as soon as possible. **DO NOT MISS MEALS!**

On the day after surgery, start rinsing your mouth every few hours with warm salt water. Brush your teeth, if possible. It is important to keep your mouth clean during the period of wound healing.

Unless the Doctor or his assistant advises you otherwise, it is generally recommended that you apply intermittent ice packs to your face over the area of surgery for the first 12-24 hours after surgery.

### **Common Problems**

**Bleeding:** For a number of hours following surgery there is often a slight oozing of blood. The mixture of this blood with saliva often makes the bleeding appear to be more than it really is. However, if it continues or seems to be excessive, carry out the following: Cleanse your mouth with a gentle rinse of fresh water; then place a folded gauze pad directly over the wound or surgery site and close your teeth together firmly. (Do not use absorbent cotton or paper tissues.) Do not become excited, but remain quiet and apply pressure with the gauze in place for 30 minutes by the clock. If bleeding persists, repeat the pressure with gauze for an additional 30 minutes.

**Nausea and Vomiting:** This is usually due to either swallowing of blood or sensitivity to the medications you are taking. Often the consumption of milk or some other bland food will settle the stomach. If nausea continues, narcotic pain medication should be discontinued (unless absolutely necessary for pain control).

**Facial Swelling:** Some patients have a tendency to have facial swelling following oral surgery. The pressure of ice packs over the swelling areas will often reduce the size of the swelling. This swelling is often greatest 24-36 hours after surgery. It should slowly decrease during the next few days.

**Muscle Soreness:** This is not unusual, especially in patients who have had general anesthesia. The soreness is temporary and should disappear within a few days.

***IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THESE OR ANY OTHER PROBLEMS AFTER YOUR SURGERY, DO NOT HESITATE TO CALL 596-1200. IN THE EVENING, CALL PRIOR TO 8 P.M., WHEN POSSIBLE, TO ASSURE THAT A PHARMACY NEAR YOU WILL BE OPEN IN CASE ADDITIONAL MEDICATIONS ARE REQUIRED.***

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