

# Wisdom Tooth Surgery

## INFORMATION SHEET



### WHAT ARE WISDOM TEETH?

- Wisdom teeth are the last teeth to appear, at the back of the mouth, from the late teens onwards. Most people have four wisdom teeth, but it is not unusual to have fewer.
- Because they are the last teeth to form, there sometimes isn't room for them. X-ray examination may show that the wisdom tooth will never grow through properly. They may come through at an angle, pressing against the teeth in front or the bone behind, and described as impacted.
- As they are coming through, the surrounding gum may become infected. This is called 'pericoronitis' and can be very painful and cause swelling of the face and restriction of mouth opening. It may settle down without any treatment or may require treatments such as removal, or the removal of the opposing tooth (to prevent it biting into the infected area) or antibiotics.
- Wisdom teeth may also require removal because of other problems such as, decay involving the part of the tooth or the adjacent tooth that cannot be easily accessed for cleaning, or because of the formation of a cyst around the wisdom tooth in bone.



### WHAT ARE THE COMPLICATIONS OF SURGERY?

- You may experience some pain after your surgery, however this can be minimised if you take the painkillers provided for you. Take them as recommended for maximum effect.
- There may be some swelling or even bruising of your face on the side of the surgery and this may take one or two days to develop and then a few more days to subside. This is nature's way of making you rest the area to let it heal more quickly.
- There may be some restriction when you try to open your mouth widely and this may last for two to three weeks, however this is not great enough to stop you eating. This is also nature's way of encouraging healing. You should be able to take a soft diet within hours of your surgery. Any food packing about the wound will settle as the gum heals.
- The nerves responsible for sensation in your lip, chin and tongue pass close to the roots of wisdom teeth and can become injured during the surgery resulting in altered sensation (tingling or numbness) in one or both of these areas and reduced taste sensation. This complication is not common. The sensation should return to normal although this can take several weeks or even months. Very rarely the altered sensation can be permanent.



### WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF REMOVING WISDOM TEETH?

- There will be no more infection, or pain, or risk of decay to the adjacent tooth.