

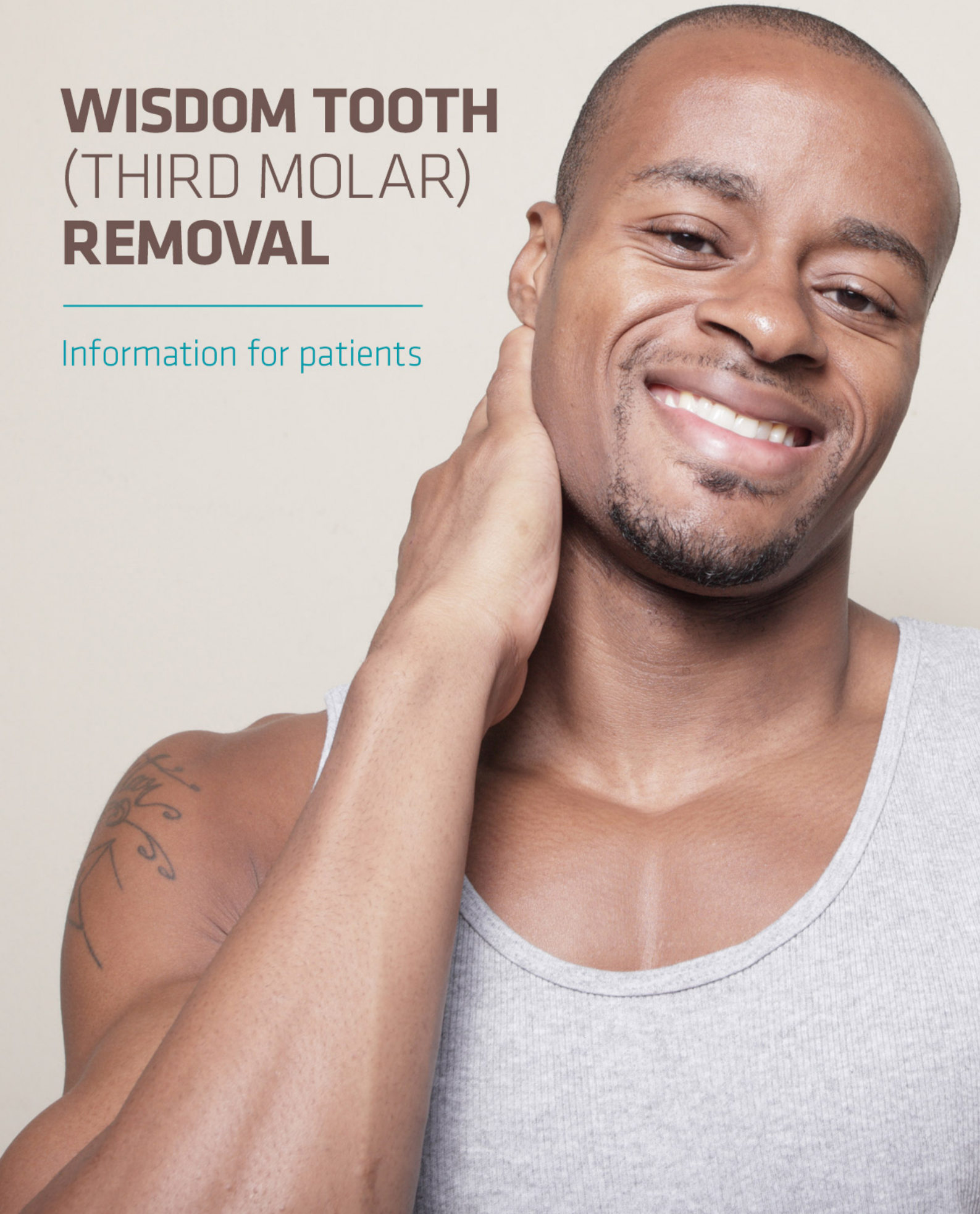


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# WISDOM TOOTH (THIRD MOLAR) REMOVAL

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Information for patients



## **Removal of impacted wisdom teeth**

This leaflet has been designed to improve your understanding of your forthcoming treatment and contains answers to many of the commonly asked questions. If you have any other questions that the leaflet does not answer, or would like further explanation, please do not hesitate to ask.

### **The problem**

The wisdom tooth (or 3<sup>rd</sup> molar) is usually the last tooth to erupt into the mouth, any time after 16 years of age. Frequently there is not enough room to accommodate wisdom teeth and as such they do not come into the mouth normally. When this happens, the wisdom teeth are said to be 'impacted'. Wisdom teeth are usually either impacted forwards into the tooth in front, or backwards into the lower jaw bone.

### **Why do I need treatment?**

An impacted wisdom tooth can cause a number of problems that mean the tooth is best removed. Most commonly these are;

- Repeated attacks of infection in the gums 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.
- Removal to facilitate other forms of maxillofacial surgery.

### **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 mouth. Sometimes it is also necessary to remove some bone surrounding the crown of the wisdom tooth. Rarely 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 depend on how difficult the wisdom tooth is to remove.

- Local anaesthetic – this is an injection into the gums 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 feel no pain while the wisdom tooth is removed. This is the best option for wisdom teeth that are simple to remove.
- Local anaesthetic and intravenous sedation – in addition to a local anaesthetic injection you can be given an injection in your arm. This makes you feel relaxed and less aware of the procedure.
- General anaesthetic – it is usually possible to remove wisdom teeth under a 'day case' general anaesthetic, i.e. although you are put to sleep completely, you will be able to go home on the same day as surgery.

If you are having day surgery with sedation or under a general anaesthetic, you need to ensure that a responsible adult is with you for the first 24 hours after surgery and that they can escort you home as well. You will need to make our own transport arrangements for your discharge unless arranged by the hospital in advance. If arrangements are not in place your surgery will be cancelled.

### **How long does it take to remove a wisdom tooth?**

This is variable. Some wisdom teeth may only take few minutes to remove. More difficult wisdom teeth that need to be cut into pieces can to be removed can take around 30 minutes to extract.

### **Is there much pain or swelling after the removal of wisdom teeth?**

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 3 days, but it may take up to 2 weeks before all the soreness goes. You may also find that your jaw is stiff and you may need to eat a soft diet for a week or so. It

is likely to be sore after your surgery and your surgeon will advise you about pain relief medication. It may also be necessary for you to have a course of antibiotics after the extraction. There may be some bruising of the skin on your face which 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 sites as clean as possible for the first few weeks after surgery. It may be difficult to clean your teeth around sites of the extraction because it is sore. If this is the case it is best to keep the area free from debris by gentle rinsing with a mouthwash or warm salt water (dissolve a flat teaspoon of kitchen salt in a cup of warm water), starting on the day after surgery.

### **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 be able not to drive (24 hours after intravenous sedation or after a general anaesthetic)

Immediately following a general anaesthetic, you may feel tired dizzy or weak. You must have somebody to collect you and stay with you for the first 24 hours. During the first 24 hours you must not drive or operate any motorised vehicles or electrical equipment, sign any legal documents, make any important decisions or drink any alcohol.

### **What are the complications associated with this procedure?**

This is usually a very safe procedure, which is carried out by specially trained staff who are very experienced. Complications with this type of surgery are, fortunately, rare and may not apply to you, but it is important that you are aware of them.

- Bleeding – although there may be a little bleeding at the time of 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 rolled-up handkerchief or swab. If the bleeding does not stop, please contact us for further help and advice or if out of hours then call 111.

- Numbness – there are 2 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 lower lip, chin or tongue, and more rarely altered taste.

About one in 10 people will have some tingling or numbness that can last for several weeks. Less than one in 100 people will have problems that last more than a year. These risks may be higher if your teeth are in a difficult position. Your surgeon will tell you if you are considered to be an increased risk.

- Infection – it is important to keep your mouth clean and to reduce or cut down your smoking following the removal of your wisdom teeth to prevent infection. Antibiotics are not routinely prescribed after surgery, but your surgeon may prescribe antibiotics for particular cases.
- risk of the roots retained or further surgery may be needed.
- stiffness of your jaw

### **Who can I contact with questions or concerns?**

**You can contact the clinic on;**

 **BMI Thornbury : 01142661133**

 **High Trees : 01143493326**

 **Occidental : 0114 2780110**

or email us on [maxfac.njl@icloud.com](mailto:maxfac.njl@icloud.com)