

Frequently Asked Questions about Wisdom Teeth

- Do wisdom teeth have to be removed?

No, wisdom teeth do not always have to be removed; healthy wisdom teeth that fit in the mouth are usually not extracted. Wisdom teeth that have not erupted and are in a good position can also be left in the mouth. However, wisdom teeth will be removed if they cause repeated symptoms or show signs of disease on examination, or if removal is required by some other dental or general condition.

- Do wisdom teeth cause crowding of other teeth?

No. Changes in dental occlusion and tooth position take place during the entire lifespan; these changes are most often seen as crowding, especially of the lower front teeth. Wisdom tooth eruption takes place around the same time as the crowding of lower front teeth begins.

- The area of my lower wisdom tooth was giving me trouble. Why was an upper wisdom tooth removed during my emergency dental appointment?

An erupted upper wisdom tooth may make inflammation in the lower wisdom tooth area worse by causing pressure in the lower wisdom tooth area.

- How long does local anaesthesia last?

Two to six hours. The duration depends on the amount of local anaesthetic used and the area that was anaesthetised (upper/lower jaw).

- I'm scared of having my wisdom teeth removed. Can I have a sedative?

You should discuss your fears with your treating dentist. Pre-medication before the removal is possible. You can ask your dentist for more specific instructions. You can read about [fear of dental work](#) on our website.

- Does the Finnish Student Health Service use general anaesthesia or nitrous oxide (laughing gas) in dental procedures?

Dental treatment is not performed under general anaesthesia. Treatment with nitrous oxide is available in Turku.

- How are wisdom teeth removed? Does it involve surgery or can they be just 'pulled' out?

The need for a specific removal technique is evaluated separately each time; the choice is affected by tooth position, root shape and how much room there is in the mouth.

- How long does the place of removal bleed?

While the bleeding usually stops on the day of the removal, you may experience slight bleeding and a taste of blood in the mouth for several days. If the wound bleeds, cover the wound with a tightly wrapped gauze bandage or some other clean compress and bite down

on it for about 30 minutes. A cold pack over the cheek may also be helpful. Repeat the procedure if the bleeding continues. Please note that spit will be stained red even by a small amount of blood in the mouth.

- When can I eat again?

You must not eat or drink for two hours after the removal. If your mouth feels very numb you should not eat or drink until the local anaesthesia has worn off somewhat; otherwise you may accidentally bite your cheek or tongue while your mouth is still numb. It is also possible that the corner of your mouth may not hold food or drink very well, and hot food may cause burns in the mouth.

- Can I smoke after I've had my wisdom teeth removed?

You must not smoke for two hours after the removal, so that the healing process can begin properly.

- How long does recovery take after removal or surgery?

Symptoms may appear seven to ten days after a surgical removal. The ache and the swelling are at their worst three to five days after the procedure. The recovery is normal if painkillers alleviate the ache. However, if there are any general symptoms, such as fever or increasing swelling, you have an inflammation that requires treatment. In that case contact your dentist.

Recovery after a normal upper wisdom tooth removal is usually quick, as long as you remember to avoid any strenuous activities, at least on the day of removal.

- Can I get sick leave after removal or surgery?

Not automatically. If the procedure is difficult or long, you may get a couple of days off sick leave. In any case, you should remember not to exercise or overstrain yourself for a few days.

- When can I exercise again?

After a normal removal you should avoid exercise or other physical strain for at least a day; after more complex removals you should wait two to three days.

- How quickly can I get an appointment for wisdom tooth removal?

Your treating dentist will evaluate the urgency of removal on the basis of factors such as signs of disease, tooth position and development stage and the age of the patient. In urgent cases attempts are made to have the tooth removed as soon as possible. However, in less urgent cases with a preplanned procedure the waiting time may be up to one year.

If you are planning on going abroad on an exchange programme you should inform your dentist during a standard appointment well in advance before leaving.

- Do I have to do anything special before the removal?

Follow your treating dentist's instructions.

It is usually a good idea to eat properly before the procedure. Follow the instructions regarding medication given to you by your treating dentist.