

REMOVAL OF IMPACTED TEETH

What is an Impacted Tooth? All teeth are formed deep within the jaw bones. As the root develops most teeth travel toward their future place in the dental arch. This movement is called eruption. If a tooth travels in the wrong direction, or is blocked by another tooth or by dense bone, it is said to be impacted or unerupted.

What Harm Do Impacted Teeth Have? Since it is not normal for a tooth to remain beneath the surface after the age of eighteen to twenty-one years, it is easy to understand why difficulties develop. Wherever saliva can reach the crown, this may happen even though the impacted tooth cannot be seen in the mouth, decay may occur just as in ordinary teeth. There is no way to fill such cavities and severe toothache finally results.

Likewise, the germs in the saliva may cause pericoronitis, and infection around the crown of the tooth. This infection may spread to the cheek, throat or neck, with severe pain, stiffness of the jaws and general bodily illness.

As impacted teeth press against other good teeth, they injure their roots or push these teeth out of position.

Sometimes a large cyst forms around the crown of an impacted tooth with the destruction of much bone and damage to the other teeth in the region.

Why Should Impacted Teeth Be Removed Unless They Cause Trouble? While it is true that not all impacted teeth cause the complications that have been described, no one can tell by an xray picture which ones are going to give difficulty or when. Trouble usually comes unexpectedly and at inconvenient times. Older individuals do not stand the operation for removal as well as younger people, and the operation is more difficult with advancing age.

Sometimes it is advised that unerupted teeth can be removed for children. These decisions are often made by a professional well trained in Dentistry for Children or in Orthodontics. Children sometimes have extra (supernumerary) teeth for which removal may be advised to permit adult teeth to erupt normally.

If a patient with an impacted tooth waits until it causes trouble, they may first have to be treated for the infection or other complication before the operation for removal can be done. This means additional loss of time and expense as well as some added risk.

After removing an impacted tooth the wound remaining is a large one, and healing may be delayed because the body is unable to build in normal tissue as quickly as with a small wound. Fortunately in the upper jaw healing usually proceeds uneventfully. In the lower jaw, however, about three-fourths of tooth sockets will heal promptly, while about one-fourth will take longer and need some type of dressing every few days. For these reasons it is not wise for patients who have had this operation to leave at once on a long trip or go where they could not secure good dental care.

All patients about to have impacted teeth removed should understand that adjacent teeth have been weakened or otherwise injured by the presence of the impacted tooth. Adjacent teeth must therefore be considered on probation for three to six months after the impacted tooth has been taken out.

PLEASE NOTE:

- 1. Make arrangements for a responsible adult to receive instructions and care for you until you are able to take the responsibility for your own care.**
- 2. Do not plan to drive for the remainder of the day if you are going to have any relaxing or sleep producing drugs.**
- 3. Do not have anything to eat or drink 8 hours prior to your surgery appointment if you are going to go to sleep.**
- 4. Alcohol should not be used for 12 hours before and after surgery or in combination with medication.**