



Studying for your driving test? Already thinking about graduation? You may have thought you were done growing teeth, but did you know that you may have more coming?

### **What are wisdom teeth?**

Wisdom teeth are the last four of the 32 total permanent teeth of your lifetime. They are also called “third molars” because one erupts behind each of the two existing molars in the back of the four corners of your mouth. Wisdom teeth usually erupt during your late teens or early twenties. Often there are problems with wisdom teeth not erupting properly or sometimes not at all.

### **Why does my mouth hurt?**

Wisdom teeth may not have enough room in your jaw to fully erupt. In some cases, they can be misaligned: possibly positioned horizontally or angled toward or away from the other molars. Left untreated, impacted wisdom teeth can potentially harm adjacent teeth, the jawbone and the nerves.

### **I can't keep impaction vs. extraction straight...What are they again?**

If your wisdom teeth are impacted—not properly and fully erupted from the bone or gumline—your dentist may recommend extraction, or removal of those teeth.

### **My wisdom teeth seem to be coming in fine—should I still visit the dentist?**

Yes, a visit to the dentist is crucial, especially during your late teens, to monitor the progression of your wisdom teeth, even if they aren't causing any discomfort. Even properly and fully erupted wisdom teeth will need concentrated care to clean those hard-to-reach places. Your dentist can recommend the treatment option and dental care plan to best suit your specific needs.

### **What can I expect with a wisdom teeth extraction?**

Many people go through this procedure every year, and a visit with your dentist will allow him/her to evaluate your particular situation and give you an idea of what to expect. Treating your wisdom teeth now could save you from more severe dental problems in the future.

**For information on the TRICARE Dental Program, or to find more “Dental Health 101” tips, visit us online at [www.TRICAREdentalprogram.com](http://www.TRICAREdentalprogram.com).**