

Complications associated with an impacted tooth

More serious problems may occur if the sac surrounding the impacted tooth becomes filled with fluid and enlarges to form a swelling (cyst). As the cyst grows it may hollow out the jaw and permanently damage adjacent teeth, the surrounding bone and nerves. This can make the impacted teeth more difficult to remove.

Therefore it is important to visit a dental clinic as soon as you notice signs and symptoms of impacted teeth.

For more information contact the nearest oral health facility.



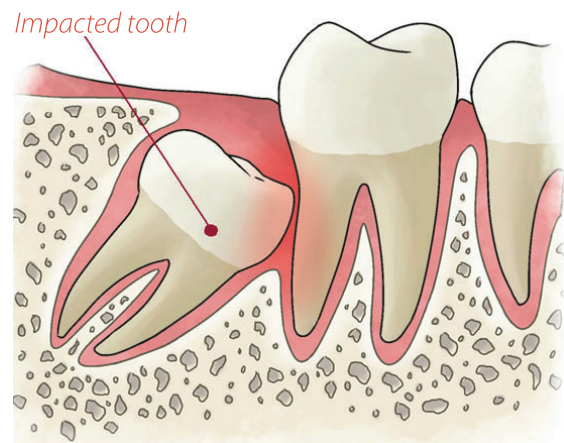
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IMPACTED TEETH

What are impacted teeth?

They are teeth that partially or fully fail to emerge through the gums. A tooth may be partially impacted, which means a portion of it has broken through the gums, or totally impacted and unable to break through the gums at all. This mostly happens to third molars or wisdom teeth, however other teeth can also get impacted.

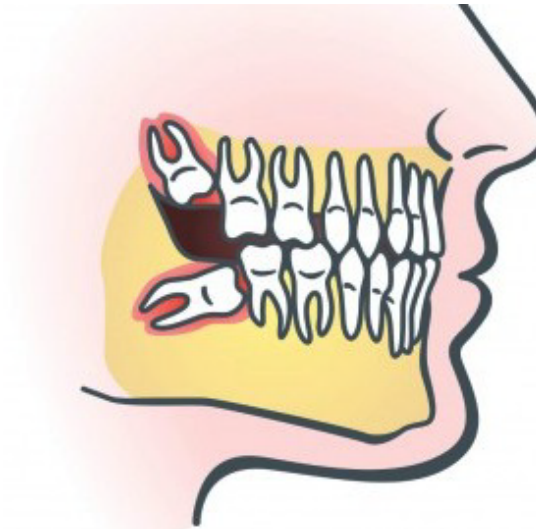


What are the causes of tooth impaction?

- Lack of space in the dental arch
- Teeth may also become twisted, tilted, or displaced as they try to emerge, resulting in impacted teeth.
- Excessive soft tissue covering the jaw bone around the eruption area.
- Thick and hard overlying jaw bone.
- Heredity

Signs and symptoms of an Impacted Tooth

- Bad breath
- Difficulty opening the mouth
- Pain or tenderness of the gums or jaw bone
- Prolonged headache or jaw ache
- Redness and swelling of the gums around the impacted tooth
- Swollen lymph nodes of the neck (occasionally)
- Pain or discomfort when chewing or around the affected teeth.
- Visible gap where a tooth did not emerge
- Crowding or damage to neighboring teeth
- Weakened jaw bone.



How can an impacted tooth be managed?

- Treatment is not necessary if an impacted tooth is not causing any problems.
- Medication can be used to manage pain and infections caused by impacted teeth (prior to removal of the tooth).
- Removal of an impacted tooth when there is pain or discomfort. This is often done through surgery, depending on the extent of the impaction.

What Happens after Surgery?

After surgery, one may experience the following;

- Swelling and mild discomfort, which are part of the normal healing process and can be relieved by medication.
- Temporary numbness from nerve irritation which goes away on its own.
- Stiffness (Trismus) of the jaw muscles which may cause difficulty in opening the mouth for a few days following surgery. This is a normal post-operative condition which resolves with time.
- Painful infected socket, sometimes due to lack of adherence to post operative instructions, in which case requires visiting the dental clinic for management.