



American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Importance of Wisdom Teeth Management

[ROSEMONT, IL, June 23, 2016] - Third molars, more commonly known as wisdom teeth, usually emerge in young adulthood between ages of 17 and 25. This period known as the “age of wisdom” brings with it many decisions. The American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS) believes one of those decisions should be how to best manage one’s wisdom teeth.

“It is important to monitor third molars early to evaluate how they enter the mouth,” said Dr. Louis K. Rafetto, president of the AAOMS. “If there is not adequate room for them to erupt and be maintained in the mouth, it is wise to have them removed before such problems as infection and/or possible damage to neighboring teeth, occur.”

According to the AAOMS, a high percentage of patients have at least one impacted wisdom tooth. Impacted wisdom teeth are often prone to infection and cavities because of their position in the mouth. Since the third molar area is difficult to clean, biofilm, or bacteria, can build up and lead to gum disease and cysts that in rare instances may weaken the jaw bone. In addition, studies have shown that oral bacteria can travel through the bloodstream and are thought to contribute to systemic infections and illnesses affecting the heart, kidneys and other organs.

“The best available evidence to date shows that surgery is appropriate in those cases where third molars show signs of disease, or where there is a high probability that disease will develop,” said Dr. Rafetto. “In cases where the third molars are entering the mouth correctly and there is no evidence of cavities or disease, an oral and maxillofacial surgeon or other dental professional may recommend active and routine monitoring of these teeth to assure that they remain problem-free.”

“The worst thing that you can do,” he emphasized, “is ignore them.”

If third molar surgery is deemed the best course of action, most patients are advised to contact an oral and maxillofacial surgeon for the surgical procedure. Oral and maxillofacial

surgeons, the surgical specialists of dentistry, are thoroughly trained to safely and comfortably administer all forms of anesthesia, including intravenous sedation and general anesthesia.

“Wisdom teeth surgery is less complicated and recovery is faster when a patient is younger, as the roots are not fully developed and the surrounding bone is softer. This minimizes the risk of damaging nearby nerves and other areas,” said Rafetto.

For more information about wisdom teeth management and how oral and maxillofacial surgeons are expertly qualified to care for them, visit www.MyOMS.org. This patient-focused website provides comprehensive information about dental implants, corrective jaw surgery, oral cancer, obstructive sleep apnea, and other conditions affecting the face, mouth, and jaw.

***The experts in face, mouth and jaw surgery™** — The American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS), the professional organization representing more than 9,500 oral and maxillofacial surgeons in the United States, supports its fellows’ and members’ ability to practice their specialty through education, research and advocacy. AAOMS fellows and members comply with rigorous continuing education requirements and submit to periodic office anesthesia evaluations. Visit MyOMS.org for additional information about oral and facial surgery*
