



How Dentists Refer Wisdom Tooth Extractions to Oral Surgeons: The Wealthy Dentist Survey Results

Half of general dentists refer out 80% or more of their wisdom tooth removals to oral surgeons, according to a Wealthy Dentist poll. Some dentists love the profit or third-molar extractions, while others hate the work and risks.

San Francisco, CA, October 01, 2007 --(PR.com)-- Half of dentists refer out 80% or more third molar extractions, according to a poll by The Wealthy Dentist. Some dentists were grateful to be rid of most or all [wisdom teeth](#) cases, while other dentists prefer to refer only the most complicated cases.

Not surprisingly, general dentists and dental specialists have very different profiles when it comes to referring patients. Specialists were sharply divided; 17% refer less than 20%, while 73% refer all extractions. General dentists were less polarized. Half refer out 80% or more. On the other hand, one in four (24%) treat most extractions, referring less than 20% of cases.

Not all general dentists are eager to remove wisdom teeth. "That's what oral surgeons are for," exclaimed a California dentist who refers out all removals. "Let those who do these procedures routinely, do them as they will do it better than I who used to do them occasionally. People do not rush to my office because I take out teeth really well," said a dentist in Trinidad & Tobago. "Oral surgeons do this day in and day out, they have the expertise to extract third molars faster and with less trauma to the patient," agreed a Texas orthodontist.

Other general dentists explain that they are fully qualified for most extractions. "Most surgical wisdom teeth are very easy and should be done by the dentist," opined a North Dakota dentist. "I know my limits, but I also enjoy Oral Surgery," said a Kentucky dentist who treats most of his wisdom teeth patients himself.

Sometimes, both the referring dentist and the surgeon win. "I refer all cases out because I don't enjoy doing them. The oral surgeon sends me some nice restorative, prosthetic, and implant cases," explained a Florida dentist. "As an implantologist, I routinely do almost all of my surgeries including third molars. One oral surgeon's office in my town routinely refers their overflow to me. Shared caring works out very well for all of us," said a California implant dentist.

For patients with complications, a referral to an oral surgeon is standard procedure. "I only refer extremely medically compromised patients, severely infected teeth, or very very difficult teeth to remove," said a North Carolina dentist. "If I'm not comfortable with an extraction, I have no problem sending my patients to any of the oral surgeons in my area. I would even go to them if I needed an extraction," declared a Pennsylvania dentist.

To some general dentists, there's just no profit in wisdom tooth extractions. "The complications are not worth the fee," said a New York dentist. "I don't have time to deal with extractions," said a South Dakota dentist who refers out all removals. "I refer difficult cases to a specialist because of the cost time ratio,



since surgical removal of a wisdom tooth costs the same as filling a molar tooth but not the same work duration," commented a dentist from Libya.

Some dentists are more than happy to avoid headaches by referring out extractions. "I thank the Lord that they are out there to refer to," commented one California dentist. "Let them deal with it," said a Kentucky dentist who refers out all removals. "I refer because I don't want the patient getting swelling and pain from treatment I did for them. Let the specialist take the heat," explained a New York dentist.

In the end, it all comes down to anesthesia for many dental practitioners - oral conscious sedation or IV sedation. "I believe it is a surgical procedure and it should be done under general anesthesia by the person best qualified," said a Texas dentist who refers out all removals. "I treat my patient, not my wallet. Dentists who take out the upper and then send out for lower are the biggest frauds in the world. It makes no sense. If a patient is going to sleep why not let the oral surgeon do all four?"

Not all dentists were impressed by the skill of oral surgeons. "Some are good, but too many talk about how fast they can do them. What good is that?" asked a Colorado periodontist. "Oral surgeons are a big help when needed...but they sometimes act as if they 'own' the patients and don't do what they are referred for. I have fired several oral surgeons for not following the treatment plan," complained a Georgia dentist.

"Passions run high when it comes to wisdom teeth," said Jim Du Molin, dental marketing consultant and founder of The Wealthy Dentist. "It's yet another example of the sometimes troubled, sometimes productive relationship between general dentists and specialists."

For additional information on this and other Wealthy Dentist surveys in the areas of Cosmetic Dentistry, Dental Implants, Braces and Sedation Dentistry, as well as more dentists' comments, visit www.thewealthydentist.com/survey.

The Wealthy Dentist is a dental marketing and dental management resource featuring dental consulting expert Jim Du Molin. The site's weekly surveys and dental newsletters are viewed by thousands of dentists across the United States and Canada. The Wealthy Dentist is a sister company of the Internet Dental Alliance, Inc. (www.internetdentalalliance.com). IDA is the largest provider of websites for dentists, email patient newsletters and dental directories in North America.

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