PERICORONITIS

DESCRIPTION
Pericoronitis is an inflammation of the tissue surrounding the tooth. This condition is often associated with an impacted or partially erupted third molar or wisdom tooth. A partially erupted tooth may have a flap of gum tissue that will collect food particles and bacteria creating an inflammation sometimes leading to a gum infection.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS
• Red swollen flap of gum tissue over the last molar tooth
• Pain present on chewing
• Bad smell or taste in the mouth
• Swollen jaw and possible tender and/or swollen lymph nodes in your neck or on that side
• Trismus (difficulty opening and closing mouth)
• Frequently you may have chills, fever, and general malaise
• Possible discharge of pus from the gum near the tooth

CAUSES
• Bacteria and food are allowed to collect and grow under the flap of soft tissue covering the last molar
• Irritation of the flap of gum tissue overlying the lower third molar by the cusps of the opposing tooth while chewing

PREVENTION
• Good oral hygiene making sure bacteria does not accumulate under gums or condition will recur
• Brushing, irrigating with a water pick, or rinsing with water after meals
• Remove wisdom teeth that are impacted, in poor position, or will not be able to fully erupt

TREATMENT
• Irrigation beneath the flap with saline or antiseptic solution may be done by the dentist
• Antibiotic therapy is sometimes initiated
• Condition may completely resolve but only if the tooth has enough space to fully erupt without pocketing
• Reducing the opposing cusp length may help alleviate some symptoms
• In some cases, the flap of tissue may be surgically removed
• Removal of opposing wisdom tooth may reduce gum irritation
• Removal of impacted tooth with inadequate space or poor position is often the recommended treatment

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This information is for educational purposes only. Consult your doctor for specific medical advice, diagnosis and treatment.

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