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Dental Emergencies: What Parents Need To Know

Dental accidents can happen anywhere, anytime.

Knowing how to handle a dental emergency can mean the difference between saving and losing your child's permanent tooth.

For all dental emergencies, it is important to take your child to the dentist or an emergency room as soon as possible. Read on for frequently asked questions.

What do I do if my child knocks out his or her tooth?

Make sure your child does not have a more serious injury. Remember to call 911 for help if necessary. For a knocked-out permanent or "adult"



tooth, keep it moist at all times by placing it in a container or in milk, or use a tooth preservation product that has the American Dental Association (ADA) Seal of Acceptance. Then, get to your dentist's office right away. A primary (baby tooth) does not need to be moistened but, if possible, it should be found to bring to the dentist.

What if my child cracks a tooth?

For a cracked tooth, immediately rinse the mouth with warm water to clean the area. Put cold compresses on the face to keep any swelling down. See your child's dentist as soon as possible.

How do I treat a bite to my child's tongue or lip?

If your child bites his tongue or lip, clean the area gently with water and apply a cold compress. See your child's dentist or go to the emergency room as soon as possible.

How do I treat my child's toothache?

For toothaches, rinse the mouth with warm water to clean it out. Gently use dental floss to remove any food caught between the teeth. Do not put aspirin on your child's aching tooth or gums; it may burn the gum tissue. If the pain persists, contact your child's dentist.



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What if I think my child's jaw is broken?

If you think your child's jaw is broken apply cold compresses to control the swelling. Go to your child's dentist or a hospital emergency department immediately.

How do I remove an object that's stuck in my child's mouth or teeth?

For objects stuck in the mouth, try to gently remove with floss but do not try to remove it with a sharp or pointed instrument. See your child's dentist or go to the emergency room as soon as possible.

Safety Tips to Avoid a Dental Emergency

There are a number of simple precautions to take to avoid accident and injury to the teeth:

- Wear a mouthguard (and helmet when appropriate) when participating in sports or recreational activities.
- NEVER use teeth to cut or open things. Use scissors (supervised if a young child).
- Do not run around with objects in your mouth (eg. toothbrush, pencils, suckers, etc.)
- Use gates to block stairways and dangerous areas from young children.
- Visit the dentist every 6 months to make sure your teeth are healthy and strong.