
How to Handle Dental Emergencies

- Knocked Out Tooth
- Broken or Cracked Tooth
- Bitten Cheek, Tongue or Lip
- Object Caught Between Teeth
- Toothache or Swollen Face
- Possible Broken Jaw
- While Traveling

Be Prepared!

Knowing how to handle a dental emergency can mean the difference between saving and losing your child's tooth. Here are some tips to help you handle a dental emergency quickly and calmly.

Knocked-Out Tooth

Go to the dentist right away. It's best to see a dentist within 30 minutes. Bring the tooth and any tooth pieces you can find.

Baby Tooth (Primary)

It's normal for children to lose baby teeth, but an accident that damages a primary tooth could also harm the permanent tooth underneath.

- Take your child to the dentist as soon as you can.
- If a tooth is completely out, do not try to put it back into the tooth socket.

Adult Tooth (Permanent)

Unlike a baby tooth that is knocked out, an adult tooth should be put back into the socket.

- Hold the tooth by the top and not the by root.
- If it looks dirty, rinse the root briefly with water. Do not scrub the tooth or remove any attached bits of tissue.
- First, try to gently insert and hold the tooth in its socket with a clean washcloth or gauze pad. If this isn't possible, try these other options in this order:
 - See if your child can hold the tooth under their tongue or between the cheek and gums.
 - Put the tooth in a container with milk, saliva, saline (salt) solution, or an emergency tooth preservation kit.
 - If none of those liquids are available, put the tooth in water.

Broken or Cracked Tooth

Go to the dentist right away, and bring the broken tooth piece with you (if possible).

- Rinse the mouth with warm water to keep the area clean.
- If you can find the broken tooth piece, wrap it in some wet gauze or a wet towel.
- Put a cold compress (like an ice pack or a washcloth with ice wrapped inside) on the face to reduce swelling.

Bitten Cheek, Tongue or Lip

- Clean the area gently with a cloth and place a cold compress on the area (if possible) to keep swelling down.
- If there is a lot of bleeding or if it doesn't stop after 1-2 hours, take your child to a dentist or an urgent care center.

Objects Caught between Teeth

- Do not try to remove the object with a sharp or pointed instrument.
- Gently try to remove the object with dental floss.
- If floss doesn't work, go to the dentist.

Toothache or Swollen Face

Swelling of the face can be a sign of serious infection. If your child's face is swollen, take your child to your dentist or physician.

- Rinse the mouth with warm water to clean it out.
- Give your child what you would normally give them for pain, but do not put aspirin directly on the aching tooth or gums.

Possible Broken Jaw

- Apply a cold compress to control swelling.
- Take your child to the dentist or an emergency center right away.

Be Prepared When You Travel

- Find a dentist at your destination by visit findadentist.ada.org.
- If you are out of the country, contact the U.S. Embassy. Many embassies and consulates keep lists of local medical and dental staff, which may also be available online at www.usembassy.gov.