

# Tips for dealing with dental emergencies

There are a number of simple precautions you can take to avoid accidental injury to your teeth. Wear a mouthguard when participating in sports or recreational activities that may pose a risk. Avoid chewing ice, popcorn kernels and hard candy, all of which can crack a tooth. Always use scissors rather than your teeth.

Accidents do happen, and knowing what to do when one occurs can mean the difference between saving and losing a tooth.

Most dentists reserve time in their daily schedules for emergency patients. If you experience a dental emergency, call your dentist and provide as much detail as possible.

## Bitten Lip or Tongue

Clean the area gently with a cloth and apply a cold compress to reduce swelling. If the bleeding doesn't stop, seek medical care immediately.

## Broken Tooth

Rinse your mouth with warm water to clean the area. Use a cold compress on the area to keep swelling down. Call your dentist immediately.

## Jaw Possibly Broken

Apply a cold compress to control swelling. Go to your dentist or seek medical care immediately.

## Tooth Knocked Out

If it's dirty, gently hold the tooth by the crown and rinse off the root of the tooth in water. Do not scrub or remove any attached tissue fragments. If possible, gently insert and hold the tooth in its socket. If that isn't possible, put the tooth in a cup of milk and get to the dentist as quickly as possible. Remember to take the tooth with you!

## Objects Caught Between Teeth

Try to gently remove the object with dental floss and avoid cutting the gums. If you own a water pick, give that a try. Never use a sharp instrument to remove any object that is stuck between your teeth. If you can't dislodge the object using dental floss, contact your dentist.

## Toothache

Rinse your mouth with warm water to clean it out. Gently use dental floss or a water pick to ensure that there is no food or other debris caught between the teeth. Never put aspirin or any other painkiller against the gums near the aching tooth because it may burn the gum tissue. Instead use an oral numbing gel designed for pain. If the pain persists, contact your dentist.

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