

PATIENT'S PAGE



This message brought to you by your dentist - a proud member of the Oklahoma Dental Association



If a child's primary tooth is knocked loose, the patient should see a dentist within a day or two. Even though children lose these primary teeth normally, trauma that causes a tooth to become loose could actually damage the permanent tooth below.

Ways to AVOID a mouth injury:

- Wear a mouth guard when participating in sports or recreational activities.
- Avoid chewing ice, popcorn kernels and hard candy, all of which can crack a tooth.
- Cut tape using scissors rather than your teeth.

Dental Emergencies – Tips for Being Prepared

Of course, avoiding a dental emergency or injury is ideal, but being prepared is your best defense. Accidents are inevitable. Remaining calm and knowing what to do when an accident occurs can mean the difference between saving and losing a tooth.

Knocked Out Tooth

Holding the tooth by the crown, gently rinse the root of the tooth with water only to remove dirt or debris. Do not scrub it 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!

Broken Tooth

Rinse your mouth with warm water to clean the area. Use cold compresses on the area to manage swelling. Locate and save any broken tooth fragments. Call your dentist immediately.

Loosened Tooth

If a tooth can be moved slightly forwards or backwards, gently use light pressure with your finger to reposition the tooth to its normal alignment. Do not try to force the tooth back into its socket. Hold the tooth in place with a moist tissue or gauze. Contact your dentist immediately.

Cracked Tooth

It may be difficult to determine if a tooth is cracked. A crack may appear as a hairline fracture, running vertically along the tooth and may not be visible to the eye. Depending on the size and location of the crack, treatment may vary from bonding to root canal treatment. A severely cracked tooth may need extraction. Your dentist will determine the best treatment for you. Tiny cracks are common and usually do not cause problems. Regular dental checkups are important. Checkups allow your dentist to diagnose and treat problems in the early stages of a crack. If you continue to have pain, avoid chewing on that side of your mouth and call your dentist.

Cut Lip, Tongue or Cheek Lining

Clean the area gently with a cloth and apply cold compresses to control any swelling. Apply ice to bruised areas. If there is bleeding, apply firm but gentle pressure with a clean gauze or cloth. If bleeding does not stop after 15 minutes or it cannot be controlled by simple pressure, go to a hospital emergency department immediately.

Jaw May Be Broken

To control the swelling, apply cold compresses to the injured area. Go to your dentist or a hospital emergency room immediately.

Object Caught Between Teeth

Try to gently remove the object with dental floss; avoid cutting the gums. 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, seek the assistance of your dentist.

Toothache

Rinse your mouth with warm water to clean it out. Gently use dental floss 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. If the pain persists, contact your dentist.

What do I do if I'm traveling?

- Look in the telephone book under "dentist" to find the state or local dental society phone number to get a referral.
- Ask the hospital emergency room staff to recommend a dentist.
- Ask hotel personnel to refer you to a dentist.
- If you are out of the U.S., contact the U.S. Embassy or ask hotel personnel to recommend a dentist.