

## DENTAL EMERGENCIES & INJURIES

There are a number of simple precautions you can take to avoid accident and injury to your teeth. One way to reduce the chances of damage to your teeth, lips, cheek and tongue is to 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. Cut tape using 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. Call your dentist and provide as much detail as possible about your condition. Remember, pain is a signal that something is wrong—a problem that will not disappear even if the pain subsides. If you're concerned about visiting the dentist because you have limited or no dental insurance, ask your dentist if the practice offers a convenient outside monthly payment plan. If the answer is yes, you can submit an application online and get an immediate credit decision—and the emergency care you need.

### Tips for Dealing with Dental Emergencies

#### **Bitten Lip or Tongue**

Clean the area gently with a cloth and apply cold compresses to reduce any swelling. If the bleeding doesn't stop, go to a hospital emergency room immediately.

#### **Broken Tooth**

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

#### **Cracked Tooth**

Please refer to the Cracked Tooth Tips page in the download section.

#### **Jaw-Possibly Broken**

Apply cold compresses to control swelling. Go to your dentist or a hospital emergency department immediately.

#### **Knocked Out Tooth**

Hold the tooth by the crown and rinse off the root of the tooth in water if it's dirty. 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!

#### **Objects 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, contact your dentist.

#### **Toothache**

Rinse your mouth with warm water to clean it out. Gently use dental floss or an interdental cleaner 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.

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