

## What To Do in Case of an Emergency

**F**or a parent, seeing a child lose a tooth in an accident can be very distressing. Such injuries are often bloody and can be anxiety provoking for the child as well.

**A**ll teeth, even baby teeth, are important. Many parents, are under the false impression that baby teeth are less important because they will eventually be replaced.

**T**his is absolutely not true. Baby teeth serve several important functions including, acting as spacers creating enough room in the jaw so that permanent teeth can come in, aiding in proper speech development, and serving to help build self-esteem in the newly independent child.

### Before an emergency ever occurs:

**K**eep our emergency number readily available (carry it in your wallet or organizer, for example). We have out of hours emergency cover so that we are available to take care of Dental Emergencies.



## Preventing Dental Injuries

The best way to prevent a dental emergency is to properly protect your child. Increasingly, dentists are recommending that children engaged in sports wear mouth guards. Most mouth guards are made of plastic and cover the upper teeth.

Not only do mouth guards protect teeth, lips, gums, and cheeks they also prevent brain injuries. Commonly there are two types of mouth guards:

**Semi-formable mouth guards** are available in sports shops. Often these mouth guards can be boiled to fit allowing them to sit snugly against the teeth.

**Dentist made mouth guards** are custom made. The dentist creates a mold of the mouth which is used to create the mouth guard. Consequently, these mouth guards fit more securely against the teeth affording the best protection.

Another way to reduce the risk of dental injury is to watch out for situations that commonly lead to injury. These are some of the more common:

**Trips and Falls** - Falling into furniture and down stairs often causes dental injury. This is most likely to occur when children are first learning to stand using furniture to maintain balance.

Children who are just learning to walk also have a tendency to fall down - often onto household furniture or other items. If you have an infant make sure to child-proof your home before they become mobile, usually around 12 - 16 months.

**Drinking Fountains** - Often children injure teeth by ramming them into the spout of water fountains as they drink. Sometimes children behind them accidentally bump into them causing them to injure their teeth.

**Forks and Spoons** - Believe it or not, some injuries are self-inflicted when people, not paying attention, crack or chip their teeth with spoons or forks as they eat

**Bottle Caps** - Tell you child to never open a bottle cap by using their teeth.



The most common dental emergencies include:-

- (1) Teeth that have been knocked out due to trauma.
- (2) Teeth that have been chipped as a result of an accident. In either case, it is important to know what to do.

Time is the enemy when a tooth is knocked out. If a dentist is seen within one hour after an accident, chances are good that the tooth can be saved.

### If your child's tooth is knocked out:

Carefully rinse the tooth in water. Make sure that you do not touch the root of the tooth with your hands. The root is the portion of the tooth embedded in the gum and not normally seen.

Attempt to place the tooth back in its socket and secure the tooth by getting your child to bite on a handkerchief.

If this is not possible or if you are afraid that your child might swallow the tooth, place it in a glass containing either saliva or **cold** milk.

See your dentist immediately.

### If your child's tooth is chipped:

Check to see if your child is experiencing pain or sensitivity in the tooth. If so call your dentist and seek dental treatment immediately.

Put any fragments of tooth in cold milk and take them with you to the dentist as it maybe possible for these to be repositioned back onto your child's tooth.

If your child is not experiencing pain or sensitivity, contact your dentist to see whether or not your child should be seen.

In most cases, this will not require immediate attention and your dentist will book your child for an appointment.