

DENTAL FIRST AID

The following information will help you respond to a child’s dental emergency. In any dental emergency:

- Stay calm and reassure the child.
- Assess for a head injury first.
- Wear gloves with any bleeding injury.
- Notify the parent or guardian.

BLEEDING AFTER LOSING A PRIMARY (BABY) TOOTH

- Place a clean folded gauze pad, cloth, or paper towel over the site to control any bleeding.
- Ask the child to bite on the gauze with pressure for 15 minutes.
- Repeat, if necessary. If bleeding continues, notify the parent or guardian.
- Do not attempt to reinsert the primary tooth.

INJURY TO LIPS, TONGUE, GUMS OR CHEEKS

- Rinse the affected area with warm water.
- Control any bleeding.
- Apply a cold compress to the affected area to minimize bruising or swelling.
- Notify the parent or guardian.
- If the bleeding does not stop, or a tooth/teeth could be affected, arrange for the child to be transported to the dentist.



DISPLACED OR PARTIALLY DISLODGED TOOTH

- Gently clean the area with warm water.
- Control any bleeding.
- Do NOT attempt to move the tooth into the correct position.
- Notify the parent or guardian.
- Arrange for the child to be transported to the dentist immediately.



TOOTHACHE OR ABSCESS

- Rinse the mouth vigorously with warm water or salt water to dislodge any food or debris.
- Do NOT place aspirin at the toothache site as this may cause a chemical burn of the gum tissue.
- Notify the parent or guardian.



JAW DISLOCATION OR FRACTURE

- Immobilize the jaw by wrapping a scarf, necktie, or towel under the chin and tie the ends securely over the head.
- Apply ice to control swelling and bleeding.
- Notify the parent or guardian and arrange for transportation to the emergency room.

AVULSED (KNOCKED OUT) TOOTH

A permanent tooth may be successfully replanted and saved if the child is transported to the dentist within one hour.

- Find the tooth and pick it up by its crown, not the root.
- If dirty, gently rinse the tooth with water.
- Do NOT scrub the tooth.
- Hold the tooth by the crown and gently reinsert the tooth back into the socket. Make sure to insert it facing the correct direction!
- Have the child hold the tooth in the socket while being transported to the dentist by biting on a clean gauze pad or cloth.



If an avulsed tooth CANNOT be placed back into the socket:

- Place the tooth in a tooth preservation system, a cup of cold milk, the child’s saliva, or water (as a last resort).
- Never wrap a tooth in gauze, cloth, or tissue.
- Notify the parent or guardian.
- Arrange for the child to be transported to the dentist immediately.

CHIPPED OR BROKEN TOOTH

- Gently clean the area with warm water.
- Control any bleeding.
- Place a cold compress over the injured area.
- Attempt to find the broken tooth fragments and wrap them in a wet gauze pad or cloth.
- Notify the parent or guardian.



BROKEN ORTHODONTIC BRACES OR OTHER APPLIANCES

- Broken wires can be covered with wax or a piece of clean wet gauze pad until the child can be seen by an orthodontist.
- Do NOT remove a wire if it is broken off and embedded in the cheeks, gum, or tongue.
- Notify the parent or guardian.
- Arrange for the child to be transported to an orthodontist immediately.



Adapted with permission from the New Jersey Department of Health. Several photos courtesy of Dr. Dennis McTigue.

Emergency telephone numbers:

Arrange to have a dentist on call for weekend or evening emergencies.

Dentist

Doctor

Emergency medical services

Mike DeWine, Governor
State of Ohio

Kara B. Wentz, Director
Ohio Department of Children and Youth

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