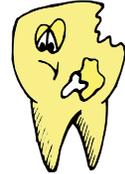


## FIRST AID FOR DENTAL EMERGENCIES AND INJURIES

**YOU can help save a tooth for a lifetime IF you know what to do!  
Do you know what to do?**



### **In all cases....**

- Keep the person calm and quiet
- If blood is involved, wear protective gloves if available
- Time is of the essence--to avoid complications and/or tooth loss, transport the person to a dentist as soon as possible

### **Broken Braces or Wires**

DO: Use a blunt item to GENTLY bend the broken or bent wire so that it is not irritating the soft tissues. If the wire cannot be bent, then to avoid tissue irritation, cover the wire end with a piece of paraffin wax, a piece of gauze, or a small cotton ball. The person should see the orthodontist as soon as possible.

DON'T: Attempt to remove any wire that is embedded in the cheeks, gums, or tongue. Transport the person to their dentist or orthodontist immediately.

### **Object Wedged Between the Teeth**

DO: Try to remove the object with tweezers or dental floss...guide the floss against the teeth so that the gum tissue is not injured. If unsuccessful, transport the person to the dentist as soon as possible.

DON'T: Try to remove the object with a sharp or pointed tool/instrument.

### **Bitten Tongue or Lip**

DO: Clean the area with a wet cloth and apply direct pressure with a sterile gauze square to stop bleeding. If swelling is present, apply a cold compress. If the bleeding or cut is severe and/or does not stop within 30 minutes, transport the person to a hospital emergency room or to a dentist. Use of warm saltwater rinses can be helpful for a couple of days following the incident.

### **Broken Permanent Tooth**

DO: Clean dirt or debris from the injured area with warm water. Apply a cold compress on the cheek next to the injured tooth to reduce swelling. Cover any sharp tooth edges with paraffin wax to prevent tissue lacerations.

Locate and place any tooth pieces in milk or water, and transport the person to a dentist as soon as possible.

### **Tooth is Pushed Out of Place**

DO: Have the person gently bite teeth together to check for displacement. If possible, GENTLY move the displaced tooth or teeth into their correct position.

DON'T: Attempt to pull a tooth out into position if it has been pushed up into the socket.

### **Permanent Tooth is Knocked Out**

**DO:** FIND the tooth. VERY GENTLY rinse the tooth off in slowly running water. Gently replace the tooth in its socket and hold it in place. If this cannot be done, then place the tooth between the person's cheek and gum (if there is no danger of swallowing it), or in milk (best) or water, and **GET THE PERSON TO A DENTIST IMMEDIATELY! TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE** if the tooth is to be reinserted and saved. Be sure to alert the person or parent to the potential need for a tetanus shot within 24 hours (a reinserted tooth may have come in contact with bacteria before being reinserted).

**DON'T:** Touch or hold the tooth by its root. Don't try to wipe, rub, or otherwise clean off any tissue fragments or debris from the tooth—this could destroy the connective fibers which will help to re-anchor the tooth in the mouth. Don't wrap the tooth in a clean, wet handkerchief. Don't wait till the end of the event or day to get the person to a dentist. Don't try to reinsert a baby tooth.

### **Possible Broken Jaw**

**DO:** Make sure the person can breathe and keep him/her quiet. Try to keep the jaw from moving, and transport the person to an emergency room or to an oral/maxillofacial surgeon as soon as possible. In the case of uncontrolled bleeding or difficulty in breathing, call 911.

### **Basic supplies to have on hand**

Cotton

Cotton swabs

Sterile gauze squares (2" x 2")

Sterile gauze pads

Gloves

Dental floss

Tweezers

Paraffin or candle wax

Ice pack or wet frozen washcloth

#### **Sources:**

- Cabinet for Health Services, Department for Public Health, Division of Adult and Child Health, Office on Oral Health.
- University of Kentucky College of Dentistry, North Carolina Oral Health Section. June 2001

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**[www.ca.uky.edu/HEEL](http://www.ca.uky.edu/HEEL)**