



First aid for a damaged tooth

It is very important to wear a custom-fitted mouthguard when training and playing contact sport to help protect you against painful and expensive injuries to your teeth and mouth.

This page explains what to do if a tooth accidentally gets damaged or knocked out.

If a tooth is cracked or chipped, see a dentist as soon as possible. Place any broken pieces of tooth in a small amount of milk, or plastic wrap if milk is unavailable, and take them to the dentist with you.

If a primary (baby) tooth is knocked out, it is important to keep in mind the following:

- Do not attempt to put the tooth back in its socket. This may cause damage to the permanent tooth or lead to infection.
- See a dentist straight away to check if any pieces of tooth remain in the socket and to make sure no other damage has been done.
- To control bleeding, apply pressure directly to the injured area with a clean cloth. To minimise swelling, an ice pack or cold compress can be applied to the site of the injury.

If a secondary (adult) tooth is knocked out, it is important to do the following, immediately:

- Locate the tooth and handle it gently.
- If soiled, rinse the entire tooth in milk or, very quickly, in water to clean it.
- Place the tooth back in the socket, making sure it is facing the right way around. It is important to replace the tooth within 5-10 minutes of the tooth being knocked out.
- Ask the patient to hold the tooth in place by biting gently into a soft cloth. If the patient has a mouthguard but wasn't wearing it at the time of the accident, this can also be used to hold the tooth in place. Otherwise, the person providing first aid can help keep the tooth in place by covering the damaged tooth and the teeth on either side with aluminium foil.

- If it is difficult to put the tooth back in the socket, keep it moist by putting it in a small amount of milk or sealing it in plastic wrap.
- If in doubt about whether the tooth is primary or secondary, put it back in its socket. The risk of permanent damage to an adult tooth not replaced is greater than the damage caused by a baby tooth being put back in.
- **Immediately seek dental treatment for any damaged teeth - time is critical to prevent permanent damage**

Extreme care should be taken with a tooth that has been knocked out. Try to avoid the following:

- Do not handle the root of the tooth.
- Do not scrape or rub the surface of the tooth.
- Do not let the tooth dry out – keep it moist at all times.
- Do not put the tooth in ice or hot water.
- Avoid rinsing or storing the tooth in water for more than one or two seconds.
- Do not remove any soft tissue fragments from the tooth.

For more information on mouthguards and protecting teeth, visit: www.mouthguardawareness.info