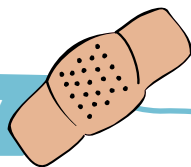


Sometimes Accidents Happen!



If a tooth is knocked out:

- If it is a baby tooth, take your child and the tooth to a dentist right away. The tooth cannot be put back in, but the dentist can determine whether any care is needed.
- If it is a permanent tooth, pick up the tooth by its biting end (not the root). Do not wash it or handle it. Gently rinse with milk if available, and place the tooth back in the hole in the gum until you can get to a dentist. If the tooth cannot be put back into the hole, place it in a container of cold milk. Go to a dentist immediately.

If a tooth is broken:

- Save any tooth fragments you can find. Place tooth fragments in a cup of milk or water.
- Rinse the injured tooth and area with warm water to remove any dirt or debris. Place a clean cold compress on the injured area.
- Take your child and the tooth fragments to the dentist immediately.

"When Patrick started playing basketball, one of the first things I bought him was a mouth guard. I figured it would save me a trip to the dentist one day. And it made him look like a 'pro' out on the court."

– Tom, Ridgefield, WA

Protecting Your Child's Mouth



What you should know about safety and injuries

A key part of protecting your child's smile is helping to prevent injuries to her mouth and teeth. Injuries, even to baby teeth, can have a permanent effect on oral health and may contribute to the need for orthodontic care (like braces).

Supervising your child during play, making your home safer, and using mouth guards when she plays sports are all part of your child's essential safety.

Safety at home

- Childproof your home when your child is learning to walk and climb. For example, limit access to stairs.
- Do not let your child run with anything in her mouth (for example, a toy, a pencil, a popsicle or a toothbrush).
- Help prevent falls by teaching your toddler to use climbing toys correctly and to climb down from furniture safely.
- Start the helmet habit by having your child wear one when riding toys.
- Watch your child during play and make sure other caregivers do the same.
- Buckle your child into a proper car seat on every car ride. A minor crash or even a swerve could result in a fall that injures your child's teeth.

Safety when playing sports

Just like a helmet, a mouth guard is important for many sports.

Why? Mouth guards protect the teeth and jaw. When something hits the mouth, the mouth guard absorbs some of the impact, and because it connects all of the parts of the mouth together, the impact is spread out and causes less harm.

Where do you get a mouth guard? Mouth guards can be purchased at a pharmacy or can be custom-made by your dentist.

When should children wear them? If your child participates in sports, ask your dentist if a mouth guard is recommended and, if so, what kind. Some sports are more risky to the teeth and mouth than others.

"I always considered braces to be just cosmetic. But my daughter's crooked teeth made it hard to keep her teeth clean, which caused cavities. Now that she's out of braces, I understand how braces helped her for the rest of her life."

– Jeff, Clinton, WA

Braces and Orthodontia

Does your child have overcrowded teeth?

Overcrowded teeth can be more difficult to care for and can contribute to tooth decay and gum disease. Orthodontic care (such as braces) can help!

Baby teeth can give clues

Even before permanent teeth start to come in, you and your dentist may see clues that your child will need orthodontic care. Baby teeth are a good indication of how a child's permanent teeth will look. If your child's baby teeth are crowded and crooked, this may tell you that braces will be needed down the road.

Factors that may increase the need for orthodontic care:

- Prolonged thumb or finger sucking
- Over-bite or under-bite
- Improper jaw development
- Significant decay in baby teeth (or removal of baby teeth)
- Overcrowded teeth
- Accidental loss of permanent teeth
- Certain medical problems

With regular dental visits, some of these problems can be addressed early or can be avoided. Be sure to ask your child's doctor or dentist if you have concerns. Don't wait until you think it is time for braces.

When orthodontic care starts

Usually, when your child is around 7 or 8 years old, your dentist will be able to determine whether he or she needs orthodontic care and can begin to take care of problems.

