



FIRST AID FOR DENTAL EMERGENCIES

Toothache:

1. Rinse the mouth with warm water to clean out food that may be lodged in the cavity. Use dental floss to remove any food that might be trapped in the cavity or between the teeth.
2. Do not place aspirin on the aching tooth or gum tissues.
3. Advise parents to take the child to the dentist as soon as possible.

Orthodontic Emergencies (problems with braces and retainers):

1. If a protruding wire is causing irritation, cover the end with a small cotton ball, beeswax, or a piece of gauze until the child can be seen by a dentist.
2. If a wire gets stuck in the cheek, do not attempt to remove it. Go to the dentist immediately.
3. If an appliance is loose or a piece breaks off, place the appliance and the piece in a clean container and advise parents to take the child to the dentist.

Bitten Lip or Tongue:

1. Apply direct pressure to the bleeding area with a clean cloth.
2. If swelling is present, apply a cold compress.
3. If bleeding does not stop within 15 minutes, advise parent of situation, and take the child to a hospital emergency room.

Chipped or Broken Tooth:

1. Gently clean dirt from the injured area with warm water.
2. Protect the tooth from further exposure to air or cold liquid (cover with sterile gauze).
3. Place a cold compress over the face, in the area of the injured tooth, to decrease the swelling.
4. If an exposed nerve is obvious, advise parents to take the student to a dentist immediately.

Knocked-Out Tooth:

1. Immediately attempt to locate the lost tooth. Handle the tooth by the top (crown), not the root portion. If the tooth cannot be found, look in the mouth area where the tooth should be to make sure it is not driven up into the soft tissue.
2. If the tooth can be located and is dirty, rinse it gently in running water. Do not scrub it or remove any attached tissue fragments. Place the tooth in a cup of milk or in a tooth preserver solution*. These are the preferred solutions to keep them in; if they are not available, place the tooth in a cup of cool water.
3. Advise parent of injury and take child to the dentist immediately (within 30 minutes if possible). Time is a critical factor in saving the tooth. Remember to take the tooth along.

Possible Broken Jaw:

1. Ask the student to close the teeth together and check for proper relationship of upper teeth to lower teeth. Especially look for teeth on one side of the mouth that are not in contact when the teeth on the other side are already in proper contact.
2. Look for muscle spasm on the injured side.
3. If swelling is present, apply cold compresses.
4. If any of the above are observed, do not move the jaw. Stabilize the jaw in place by tying a handkerchief, necktie or towel around the jaw and over the top of the head.
5. Advise parent of injury and go immediately to a hospital emergency room.

*A product called SAVE-A-TOOTH, also known as Hank's Balanced Salt Solution, can be used to soak a dry tooth and will improve the success of reimplantation when the tooth is out of the gum for more than one hour. The solution is superior to milk for maintaining the integrity of root periodontal ligament cells for longer periods of time. The tooth preserving solution is a better medium when a dentist cannot be reached within about 30 minutes from the time the tooth was knocked out. This solution is an important part of a school's emergency kit, especially when dental care is not within close proximity. SAVE-A-TOOTH solution is available in individual containers and has a three-year shelf life.