

# Dental Trauma and First Aid



“Accidents happen” is one of those phrases we casually throw around without thinking. But the reality is that accidents can have quite serious consequences for our teeth. The good news is that much of the trauma of dental injury can be minimised if you know what precautions to take and what to do in the unfortunate event you suffer damage to your teeth.

## Don't assume anything

Teeth can be cracked, chipped or become loose from accidents in ways not visible to the naked eye, and failure to get them checked out quickly by your dentist may mean sustaining otherwise-avoidable long term damage. But there's also quite a bit you can do before you reach the dentist.

## Children

You only need to be around babies or toddlers for a second to realise that bumps, knocks and spills are a standard part of growing up. If your child knocks out a tooth, quickly following these steps can minimise any long term damage:

1. Find the tooth, make sure it's clean and hold it by the crown only, not the root.
2. Place the tooth back in position, making sure it's facing the right way round (if it's a baby tooth, don't place it back in.)
3. Get to your dentist straight away, and if you can't replant the tooth, transport it in milk or saliva.

Dental trauma can also take other forms.

If your child develops a toothache, book an appointment with your dentist straight away; in the meantime, rinse your child's mouth with salt water, use paracetamol to alleviate pain and if there's swelling present, use a cold compress. This doesn't apply to [babies](#) who are teething.

If your child's braces or retainer becomes broken or bent, they shouldn't wear it again until it's

been fitted or adjusted by their orthodontist.

## Adults

Again, the key thing is to act quickly so get to your dentist as quickly as possible, ideally within 30 minutes.

1. Find the tooth and hold it by the crown only, not the root.
2. If the tooth is dirty, rinse it in milk but don't scrub or soak it.
3. Place the tooth back in position, making sure it's facing the right way round; once in, gently bite down on soft cloth or tissue, or use aluminium foil or your mouthguard to hold it in place.
4. If you can't replant the tooth, transport it in milk or saliva.

If you play sports (this also applies to children and teenagers), it's also a good idea to get a custom-fitted **mouthguard** made by your dentist to minimise the chance of any damage resulting in the first place. In cases of dental trauma, check if your usual dentist handles emergency treatments; if not, use [Find a Dentist](#) to locate a practice to assist you.



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