

# DENTAL BOOTCAMP

## FactSheet

### ► First aid for children's teeth

**Sometimes an accident is unavoidable. However, equipped with the right information, you can minimise the impact of dental trauma by following these tips:**

#### **Toothache:**

If a child develops a toothache, in the first instance, book an appointment with your dentist. If an infection is present this needs to be treated quickly so try to avoid delaying an appointment.

The steps outlined below can also be followed for temporary relief:

- Have your child rinse their mouth thoroughly with warm salt water (add a teaspoon of table salt to a glass of water) and use dental floss to gently remove any food or debris that may be lodged between the painful teeth. Do not use a sharp or pointed instrument in trying to remove any debris as this may damage teeth or injure your child.
- Paracetamol may be given for pain until the child can be seen by the dentist. Paracetamol should be swallowed rather than placed on the aching tooth or gum.
- If there is swelling present, place a cold compress on the outside of your child's cheek to minimise the swelling.

#### **Broken Braces or Retainers:**

If you have braces and a broken wire causing pain or irritation, cover the loose end with wax, a small cotton ball, piece of gauze or chewing gum and get to the orthodontist as soon as possible.

If your child's orthodontic retainer becomes broken or bent and does not fit properly, do not wear it again until it has been repaired or adjusted by your orthodontist.

#### **Broken Tooth:**

If your child breaks or cracks a tooth it is possible that the nerve of the tooth may be injured. Rinse any dirt or debris from the injured area with warm water and place a cold compress on your child's face in the area of the injury to minimise swelling. See to a dentist immediately, making sure that you take any broken pieces with you.

The dentist will evaluate the damage that has been done and will treat the break or fracture accordingly.

#### **Knocked out Tooth:**

If a tooth is knocked out, remain calm and act quickly. The following steps should be taken:

- Carefully find the tooth, handle it by the crown only (not the root) and ensure it is clean. The crown is the smooth white part of the tooth that is normally visible in the mouth.
- If the root is dirty, and your child is calm and conscious, see if they can gently suck the tooth clean. Alternatively, rinse the tooth in milk or very briefly, in water.
- Immediately replant the tooth in the socket making sure the tooth is facing the right way around. Time is critical and immediate replacement is best, and ideally should not be delayed more than 30 minutes.
- Hold the tooth in place. Aluminium foil may be used to help stabilise the tooth, or the patient can bite gently on gauze or a soft cloth.

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- If you are unable to replant the tooth, keep it moist by putting it in a cup of milk, sealing it in plastic wrap or placing it in the patient's mouth next to the cheek, if the patient is able to do so.
- Seek immediate Dental Treatment - Time is Critical.
- Points to remember:
  - Do not hold the tooth by the root surface
  - Do not scrape or rub the root surface
  - Do not let the tooth dry out
  - Do not put the tooth in ice
  - Avoid rinsing or storing the tooth in water for more than one or two seconds
  - Do not remove any tissue or gum fragments from the tooth

To help prevent against a broken or knocked out tooth always ensure your child is fitted with a custom made mouthguard when participating or training in contact sports.

#### **Cut or Bitten Tongue, Lip or Cheek:**

For any injuries that result in bleeding, apply pressure directly to the injured area with a clean cloth or gauze pack. This will help to control the bleeding. However, if bleeding does not stop within about 15 minutes, take your child to the emergency room or your dental surgery. If the injury is severe it may require stitches. To minimise swelling, you can apply ice or cold compresses to your child's face at the site of the injury.

With any dental injury, always seek professional advice from a dentist, or if a dentist is not available, seek advice from a healthcare professional.

