CANADIAN
DENTAL
ASSOCIATION

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DENTAIRE
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DENTAL SAFETY

Preventing dental injuries is an important part of keeping your child's smile healthy for life. By taking simple precautions, you can help your child avoid most common dental injuries.

PREVENTING DENTAL INJURIES

- Babies will chew on almost anything. Keep babies away from hard objects that could hurt their teeth or gums.

- Children fall often when they are learning to walk. Teeth can break, crack, get knocked out, or become loose. See your dentist no matter how minor the injury may seem. Long-term consequences such as brown spots on adult teeth can occur as a result of a seemingly minor injury to the primary teeth.

- Always use a car seat appropriate for your child's age and weight.

- If your child is active in sports where contact is possible, encourage the use of a mouthguard. Mouthguards reduce the risk of dental injuries by absorbing the impact from a blow to the mouth or jaw. A mouth guard helps protect the soft tissues of the mouth. Mouthguards have also been shown to decrease the risk of concussions. A number of different types of mouthguards are available. The most comfortable ones are custom-made in the dental office. Ask your dentist about the type of mouthguard that is best for your child.

ACCIDENTS DO HAPPEN, AND KNOWING WHAT TO DO CAN MEAN THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SAVING AND LOSING A TOOTH. HERE'S WHAT TO DO FOR SOME OF THE MOST COMMON DENTAL INJURIES:

FOR A KNOCKED-OUT TOOTH

- If our child's tooth is completely knocked out, rinse it quickly with water and try to put it back into the socket. Do not scrub the tooth at all.

- Hold the tooth by the crown (top), not the root, so you do not damage the ligaments when putting it back into the socket.

- If you cannot put the tooth back into its socket, put it in a container of cold milk and take it with you to your child's dentist, or to the nearest dentist immediately.

- Rinse the mouth out with water if area is bleeding. Place a wad of tissue or gauze on the socket and bite down on it. The pressure applied will usually stop the bleeding.

- If you can get help within 10 minutes, there is a chance that the tooth will take root again.

FOR A CHIPPED OR BROKEN TOOTH

- Broken teeth can almost always be saved. Call your child's dentist, explain what happened and ask to see him or her right away.

- If possible, bring in any piece of the chipped or broken tooth to your dentist. If it's a small break, your dentist may use a white filling to fix the tooth. If the break is serious, a root canal may be needed.

FOR A BADLY BITTEN TONGUE OR LIP

- Apply pressure with a clean cloth to the part of your child's mouth that is bleeding.

- If your child's lip is swollen, use an ice pack to keep the swelling down. If the bleeding does not stop, go to a hospital emergency room.

Oral health is an important part of your child's overall health and well-being. Prevention of tooth decay and mouth injuries starts at home with good eating habits, daily brushing and flossing, and with a properly fitted mouthguard worn during sport activities. Good oral health habits and regular visits to the dentist will ensure your child has a healthy smile.