

# Prevent Accidents

## but know what to do if one occurs

Mouth guards are one of the least expensive pieces of protective gear available. They can help prevent or minimize tooth and jaw injuries. The American Association of Orthodontists recommends mouth guards be worn any time the teeth could come into contact with a ball, a hard object, another player or the pavement. The recommendation applies to organized sports as well as leisure activities like bicycling.

**If a mouth guard is not worn and an injury occurs, follow these first aid tips.**

### Broken Teeth

- Clean the injured area and put an ice pack on the lip or gum.
- Cover any exposed area with sterile gauze.
- Save the tip of the tooth (for possible reattachment) and call your family or pediatric dentist right away.
- Store the tooth fragment in water.



### Loosened Teeth

An accident can cause a tooth to come loose from the socket. a tooth can be:

- Pushed into the socket (intruded)
- Knocked part way out of the socket (extruded)
- Pushed sideways, but still in the socket (luxated)
  - Apply an ice pack to the injury.
  - You may attempt to gently push an extruded tooth back into the socket.
  - Call your family or pediatric dentist for immediate attention. Early stabilization is the best chance for the tooth to reattach itself.



## Knocked Out Permanent Tooth

### Time is Critical

A tooth might be saved if cared for properly and reimplanted as soon as possible. Timely treatment may improve the chances of reattaching an injured tooth.

- Call your family or pediatric dentist for immediate attention.
- Locate the tooth; hold it by the crown (the wide part, not the pointed end/root).
- Remove large pieces of debris, but avoid rubbing or touching the root.
- Rinse the tooth. Do not scrub. If using a sink, be sure to put the plug in the sink so that the tooth will not go down the drain if it is dropped.
- Attempt to gently put the clean tooth back in its socket. Cover with gauze or tissue and bite down to stabilize it, if possible, or hold the tooth in its socket until seen by the dentist.
- If the tooth cannot be put back into its socket, store the tooth in liquid until you see the dentist. Put the tooth in milk or sterile saline solution (contact lens solution with no preservatives). Do not soak or store the tooth in water because water will kill the cells on the root that are vital for successful reimplantation. If milk or saline solution are unavailable, the tooth can be stored in the cheek where saliva will help provide vitality to the root surface. If stored in the cheek, be careful not to swallow the tooth.
- **Do not let the tooth dry out.**

KNOCKED OUT TOOTH



## Jaw Injury

**If teeth appear to fit together properly when the mouth is closed:**

- Apply ice to control swelling.
- Restrict diet to soft foods and if no improvement occurs within 24 hours, seek dental care to rule out subtle injuries.
- If in doubt at any time, contact your dentist or seek medical attention.

**If teeth do not fit together properly when the mouth is closed:**

- Seek emergency medical attention.