

Splints for damaged permanent adult teeth in children

Information for parents of children with splints placed on loose, moved or knocked out adult teeth.

Introduction

Children and teenagers might suffer injuries which damage their teeth, gums or face. This might be due to a fall, collisions or accident while playing sports.

These injuries can make teeth:

- loose
- wobbly
- fractured, or broken
- displaced, or moved out of position
- knocked out

Dental trauma (injury) can affect the future of teeth, so it is important that children get dental care after an injury.

The treatment will depend on if their baby teeth or adult teeth are injured.

If an adult tooth is loosened or knocked out, it might need to be moved back, or replaced, into its normal position.

After this, the tooth might need a splint to hold it in place.

Splints for dental injuries

A splint can be used to hold the injured tooth in place.

It is usually made of a thin, flexible wire and a special cement.

The injured tooth is held securely in its correct position by fixing a splint to the tooth, and one or more teeth on either side (Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1
A tooth moved out after an accident.



Figure 2
The tooth moved back into the correct position. A splint was used to hold the tooth in the correct position.

The splint is usually left on the teeth for 2 to 4 weeks. This depends on the type of injury.

For some children, a splint might need to be left on the tooth for up to 4 months. This happens if the root of the tooth is broken.

A removable splint is sometimes used, which can look like a sports mouth guard.

Looking after your child's mouth

Brushing teeth

Your child should brush their teeth gently, using a soft toothbrush. Teeth should be brushed twice a day, once in the morning and once at night. If possible, brush the teeth after eating, especially around the splint.

Mouthwash

Your child can use Corsodyl® mouthwash (0.2%), or Corsodyl® dental gel (1%). You can buy these from a pharmacy. Your dentist will give you instructions on how to use this mouthwash or gel.

Eating

Your child should eat soft food while the splint is in place. For example, pasta, soup, yoghurt or bananas. Try to avoid hard foods. Talk to your dentist about foods to avoid if you are unsure.

Pain

Your dentist will recommend painkillers for your child, such as paracetamol or ibuprofen. Always use these as recommended by your dentist. Do not use more than the recommended amount (dose) on the leaflet that comes with these medicines.

Contact sport

Your child will need to avoid contact sports while the splint is in place.

Appointments

Your child will need appointments after having their splint fitted.

The hospital dentist might want to see your child a few days after the splint is fitted to check the teeth, and see if the splint is secure.

Bring your child to all appointments as instructed, as a splint can damage the teeth if left in for too long.

The number of appointments your child has will depend on their injury.

They might only need 1 or 2 visits to the hospital before being asked to see their local dentist for follow-up.

If the damage to your child's teeth is worse, they might need to have appointments at the hospital for a number of years.

Important information

If the splint becomes loose between appointments, your child will need to see a dentist as soon as possible to have the splint fixed.

Take your child to their local dentist, or contact the paediatric dentistry department at St Thomas' Hospital.

Complications after dental injury

Complications include sensitivity, pain and damage to the nerve of the tooth. Damage to the nerve can lead to infection, which would need root canal treatment.

Root canal treatment

Root canal treatment removes the infected or dead nerve. It is often done with local anaesthetic, which is an injection to numb the area so your child does not feel any pain.

Root canal treatment can take several visits to complete.

In teeth that have been completely knocked out and put back in, root canal treatment might not work. The tooth might have to be removed and replaced with a false tooth.

Sometimes the infected root might start to dissolve. This can lead to tooth loss, and needing a false tooth.

Preventing dental injuries

If your child plays contact or ball sports (such as football, rugby or hockey), they should wear a sports mouth guard to protect the teeth.

If your child still has baby teeth as well as adult teeth, their mouth guard will need to be changed regularly, to be sure of a good fit as their mouth changes.

Contact details

Paediatric Dentistry Department, Dental Centre,
Ground Floor South Wing (Purple Zone), St Thomas'
Hospital.

Phone 020 7188 7188 extensions 50203 or 50202

For more information on conditions, procedures,
treatments and services offered at our hospitals, visit
web www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/leaflets

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our
Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS).

Phone 020 7188 8801 (PALS)

Email pals@gstt.nhs.uk

To make a complaint, contact the complaints
department.

Phone 020 7188 3514 (complaints)

Email complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care
in a different language or format, please get in touch.

Phone 020 7188 8815

Email languagesupport@gstt.nhs.uk

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

Phone 111

NHS website

Online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing, **web** www.nhs.uk

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Phone 0800 731 0319

Email members@gstt.nhs.uk

Web www.guysandstthomas.nhs.uk/membership

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