

HOW TO HANDLE A DENTAL EMERGENCY

There are many precautions that you can take to avoid a dental emergency. Maintain healthy teeth by visiting your dentist regularly, wear a mouth guard when playing sports, avoid chewing ice, popcorn kernels and hard candy and use scissors to cut rather than your teeth.

Even when all precautions have been taken, accidents do happen and knowing what to do can mean saving or losing a tooth. Here are some common dental emergencies and how to handle them. With any dental emergency, contact your dentist immediately.

Broken/Cracked Tooth

This may or may not be painful. If there is bleeding, it can be stopped by applying gentle pressure. Rinse the area with warm water to cleanse. Use a cold compress to keep swelling down and take an over the counter pain reliever to reduce any pain or discomfort.

Knocked Out Tooth

Timing is critical if a tooth is knocked out. There is a good chance the tooth can be re-implanted if you see your dentist within 30 minutes. Handle the tooth by the crown (part that is visible in mouth) and avoid touching any attached tissue. If possible, place the tooth back in the socket and gently

hold in place. If this is not possible, place the tooth in milk or salt water. Get to your dentist as soon as possible. Remember to take the tooth with you.

Lost Filling or Broken crown

A lost filling may be replaced with a temporary material that can be purchased at the drug store. The filling should then be replaced permanently by your dentist to prevent decay from food or bacteria. An over the counter pain medication will reduce swelling and/or pain caused by an infection. A crown that comes off should be re-cemented to avoid decay on the remaining tooth structure. A small amount of temporary material or toothpaste can be used to hold the crown in place until your visit with the dentist.

Toothache

Toothaches generally require immediate attention. A bacterial infection can worsen rapidly and could require antibiotics. Take an over the counter pain medication, avoid extreme temperatures and sweets as not to aggravate the symptoms. A warm compress and a rinse with warm water to cleanse the area may provide some relief. Never apply pain medicines directly to the gums, this may cause a burn.

At the office of Dr. Charles E. Lee, III appointments are available for those unanticipated dental emergencies.

Please call our office at (770) 965-5548. We look forward to taking care of you and your family!