

# Prevent accidents first...but, know what to do when they do occur

What if you and some friends were playing an informal game of basketball and one of your friends was struck down by a hard jab to the mouth. What if you were the one to fall face down, only to find you were bleeding and had lost a tooth?

It is important to be prepared in case such an accident takes place. The nation's top dental associations including the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) and the American Dental Association (ADA), offer the following first aid tips to assist you in case an accident occurs:

## **Fractured/Broken tooth**

- Find the broken pieces, store in water or milk.
- See dentist within 24 hours – may be able to reattach the broken pieces of tooth.
- Analgesics for pain.

## **Displaced tooth**

- See your dentist immediately.
- If the tooth is extruded (hangs down) try to reposition.

## **Knocked out tooth**

- See your dentist immediately – time is essential! For best results, replantation should be done within 5 – 10 minutes.
- Upon locating the tooth, hold it by the crown (the wide part, not the pointed end/root).
- Rinse the tooth but avoid rubbing it or touching the root. Put the tooth back in its socket; cover with gauze or tissue and bite down to stabilize it. Or, briefly store the tooth in cold milk. Alternatively, spit in a cup and place the tooth in the cup.

- Do not let the tooth dry out. A tooth can usually be saved if cared for properly and reimplanted within an hour.

### **Facial cuts**

- Cover the wound with a clean dressing and apply pressure.
- Dressing may become saturated; do not remove it. Apply more dressing and pressure.
- Go to a nearby hospital for emergency assistance.

### **Cuts inside of the mouth**

- Gently rinse the mouth with cold water.
- Bite on some gauze, a clean cloth or tissue and apply pressure to the wound.
- Go to the closest hospital emergency department for immediate treatment.

### **Jaw injury**

The U-shaped lower jaw often suffers multiple breaks. An upper jaw fracture may cause visible distortion of the face.

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

- Apply ice to control swelling and take ibuprofen or a similar remedy to control pain.
- Restrict diet to soft foods and if no improvement occurs within 24 hours, seek dental care.

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

- Immediately seek emergency care.
- Gently align the jaws.
- Immobilize the jaw; wrap a cloth bandage under the chin and secure it over the head.
- Apply ice to control swelling.

### **Broken nose**

- Gently pack the nose with gauze or tissue.
- Apply ice. Do not blow nose.