

# Toothache or Injury

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## Causes

- Main Cause: tooth decay
- Food wedged between the teeth
- Injured tooth

## First Aid:

### *First Aid Advice for Knocked-Out Permanent Tooth*

- To save the tooth, it must be reimplanted as soon as possible (2 hours is the outer limit for survival). Right away is best. If more than 30 minutes away from dental or medical care, replace the tooth in the socket before coming in. Use the following technique:
  - Rinse off the tooth with saliva or water (do not scrub it).
  - Replace it in the socket facing the correct way.
  - Press down on the tooth with your thumb until the crown is level with the adjacent tooth.
  - Have your child bite down on a wad of cloth to stabilize the tooth until you can reach your dentist.
  - Note: Baby teeth can't be re-implanted.

### *Transporting a Knocked-Out Permanent Tooth*

- If unable to put the tooth back in its socket, follow these instructions:
- It is very important to keep the tooth moist. Do not let it dry out.
- Transport the tooth in milk or saliva (Milk is best per ADA 2003)
- MILK TRANSPORT OPTION 1 (best): Place tooth in a small plastic bag with some milk. Put the plastic bag in a cup of ice.
- SALIVA TRANSPORT OPTION 1: Put the tooth inside the child's mouth. (Be careful not to swallow it) (EXCEPTION: Age less than 12 years old)

## Care Advice for Toothache

1. Reassurance: Most toothaches are temporary and due to a sensitive tooth. If the pain becomes worse or doesn't resolve in 24 hours, it could be due to a small cavity.



2. Floss: Floss on either side of the painful tooth to remove any wedged food.
3. Pain Medicine: Give acetaminophen (e.g., Tylenol) or ibuprofen for pain relief.
4. Local Cold: Apply a cold pack or ice in a wet washcloth to the painful jaw for 20 minutes.
5. Expected Course: Most minor causes of toothache resolve in less than a day.

## When To Call

### *Call Your Dentist or Doctor Now (night or day) If*

- Your child looks or acts very sick
- Fever is present
- Face is swollen
- Severe pain and not improved 2 hours after taking pain medicine
- Permanent tooth knocked out (Reason: needs reimplantation by dentist ASAP; 2 hours is the deadline for tooth survival) --See FIRST AID
- Permanent tooth is almost falling out
- Bleeding won't stop after 10 minutes of direct pressure
- Tooth is greatly pushed out of its normal position
- Tooth that's pushed out of its normal position interferes with normal bite
- Severe pain
- Age under 1 year old

### *Call Your Dentist Within 24 Hours (between 8 am and 4 pm) If*

- You think your child needs to be seen
- Toothache present over 24 hours
- Brown cavity visible in the painful tooth
- Red or yellow lump present at the gumline of the painful tooth
- Baby tooth knocked out by injury (Reason: can't be reimplanted but dentist will check for damage to permanent tooth)
- Tooth is slightly pushed out of its normal position
- Can see a chip or fracture line (crack) in the tooth
- Tooth feels very loose when you try to move it

### *Call Your Dentist During Weekday Office Hours If*

- You have other questions or concerns

Adapted from *The American Academy of Pediatrics* (2011) at [www.healthychildren.org](http://www.healthychildren.org)

