

Dental trauma in children

Information for patients, parents and carers

This leaflet explains more about how to look after your child's teeth at home after dental trauma. If you have any questions, please speak to the dentist looking after your child.

Introduction

Dental trauma (injury) can occur after a fall, collision or accident while playing sports.

Teeth may become:

- loose
- broken (fractured)
- displaced (moved out of position)
- knocked out

The treatment required will depend on the type of injury and whether adult or baby teeth are affected.

How can my child brush their teeth?

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, also brush the teeth after eating, especially if your child is wearing a splint (a brace to hold the teeth together). Your child should use a fluoride toothpaste.

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. Your dentist might also recommend warm salt water (one teaspoon of salt in one tumbler of warm water).

What can my child eat?

Your child should eat soft food following dental trauma. This is normally recommended for one week. Soft foods include pasta, soup, yoghurt, smoothies, or bananas. Try to avoid hard, sharp and sticky foods.

Talk to your dentist about foods to avoid if you are unsure.

What if my child is in 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.

Can my child play contact sports?

Your child will need to avoid contact sports following dental trauma. If they are wearing a splint, they will need to avoid contact sports while the splint is in place. Speak to your dentist about how long they should avoid contact sports.

Does my child need antibiotics?

Antibiotics are only prescribed for certain types of dental injury, and your dentist will decide if your child needs any. Please make sure your child takes the full course of antibiotics so they work as well as possible. Talk to your child's dentist about antibiotics if you are unsure.

Will my child need regular dental appointments?

It is important that you continue to bring your child to the dentist for regular dental check-ups after dental trauma. Make sure to attend all appointments as instructed. It is important to maintain appointments with your regular dentists for routine reviews during this period.

Once your child has finished treatment in the hospital, we will discharge them back to the care of your local dentist.

Complications after dental injury

Dental injury may lead to tooth sensitivity, pain and damage to the nerve of the tooth. Damage to the nerve can lead to infection. Root canal treatment may then be required, which can involve multiple long visits.

Root canal treatment removes the infected or dead nerve. The tooth may need to be numbed with local anaesthetic so that your child does not feel pain.

Swelling, pain and bruising after the initial dental injury can take a while to get better. However, if the swelling or pain returns, this may be a sign that the nerve is infected or dead. Other signs to look out for include the tooth becoming more wobbly, changing colour or a lump forming on the gum. In this case, please speak to the dentist looking after your child.

In teeth with severe injuries (for example, 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 can start to dissolve which may complicate root canal treatment or lead to tooth loss.

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.

Please also avoid habits such as nail biting or chewing gum.

The contents of this leaflet have been adapted for use with permission from the Department of Paediatric Dentistry in Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust.

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about the information in this leaflet, please contact the Department of Paediatric Dentistry team. If your child has persistent bleeding, severe swelling or severe pain, please contact us. If out of hours or at weekends, please call NHS 111 or attend your local A&E department for advice.

Central Referral Office	020 3299 4988
Clinic Appointments	020 3299 3055
Secretary	020 3299 1681

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at our hospitals, please visit www.kch.nhs.uk/patientsvisitors/patients/leaflets

MyChart

Our MyChart app and website lets you securely access parts of your health record with us, giving you more control over your care. To sign up or for help, call us on 020 3299 4618 or email kings.mychart@nhs.net. Visit www.kch.nhs.uk/mychart to find out more.

Sharing your information

King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust has partnered with Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust through the King's Health Partners Academic Health Sciences Centre. We are working together to give our patients the best possible care, so you might find we invite you for appointments at Guy's or St Thomas' hospitals. King's College Hospital and Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trusts share an electronic patient record system, which means information about your health record can be accessed safely and securely by health and care staff at both Trusts. For more information visit www.kch.nhs.uk.

Care provided by students

We provide clinical training where our students get practical experience by treating patients. Please tell your dentist if you do not want students to be involved in your care. Your treatment will not be affected by your decision.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) is a service that offers support, information and assistance to patients, relatives and visitors. They can also provide help and advice if you have a concern or complaint that staff have not been able to resolve for you. They can also pass on praise or thanks to our teams. The PALS office is located on the ground floor of the Hambleden Wing, near the main entrance on Bessemer Road - staff will be happy to direct you.

PALS at King's College Hospital, Denmark Hill, London SE5 9RS

Tel: **020 3299 4618**

Email: kings.pals@nhs.net

If you would like the information in this leaflet in a different language or format, please contact our Interpreting and Accessible Communication Support on 020 3299 4618 or email kings.access@nhs.net

PL1072.3 May 2026
Review date May 2029

Urgent and Planned Care
Corporate Comms: 3182