

Primary Tooth Injury (Dental Trauma) in Children

This leaflet explains more about primary (baby) tooth dental trauma and aims to provide information on what it is, how it is managed and what to expect.

If you have any further questions, please ask the dentist looking after your child.

Types of Dental Trauma

Dental trauma is a relatively common injury in children and can involve their teeth, bone and gums around their teeth, tongue, lips and face. Such injury can occur because of trips or falls, sporting accidents and even road traffic injuries.

Teeth can be broken (fractured), loosened (wobbly), displaced (moved out of position) and knocked out.

How should dental trauma be managed?

You should take your child to a dentist as soon as possible so that the injury can be properly assessed and treated to achieve the best possible outcome for the tooth / teeth. The dentist will examine your child and take a dental x-ray if possible.

If there are other injuries (e.g., your child passed out or suffered other injuries elsewhere on the body) these may need to see a doctor first before seeing a dentist.

If your child's baby tooth has been knocked out it should not be reinserted back into its socket as this can harm the development of the underlying adult tooth.

What I can I do to help?

Good oral hygiene especially around injured teeth is important for good healing. Help your child to brush their teeth carefully twice daily, ideally after eating. If the injury is very fresh and your child cannot manage the toothbrush, use a clean moistened flannel to wipe the teeth.

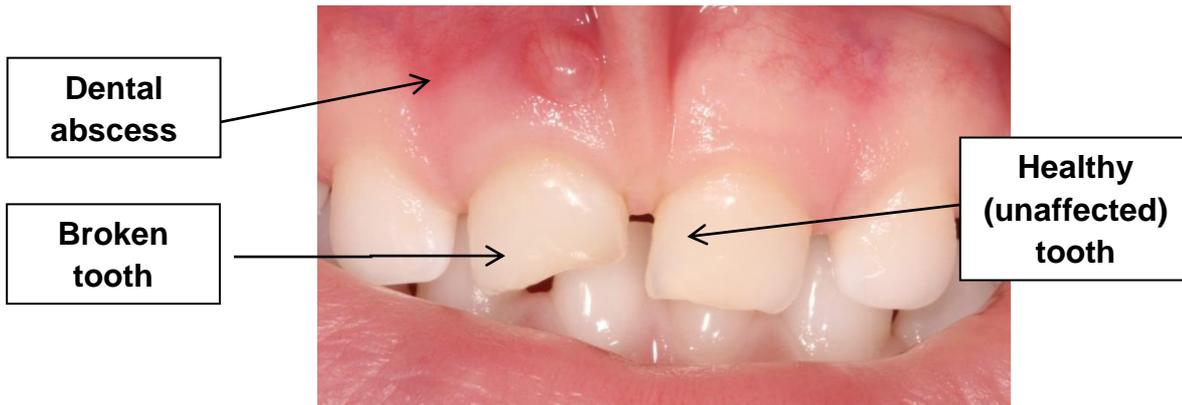
We recommend a soft diet and to avoid eating hard, sticky or chewy foods for the first few weeks.

What is going to happen to the injured teeth?

Primary teeth that have been injured will need to be monitored closely. Your child may be discharged to their regular dentist for this.

The nerve and blood supply to the injured tooth may have been disrupted by the trauma and / or exposed to bacteria from within the mouth. Injured teeth may become sensitive and / or painful and result in nerve death which may cause infection.

You can help by being alert to your child if they report a new episode of pain from the tooth. Between dentist review appointments, lifting your child's top lip every now and then to check for any signs of infection (i.e., a lump / spot on the gum above the tooth - see picture) is also helpful.



If the tooth has been broken (and the nerve of the tooth exposed), loosened, moved out of position and / or is causing pain or infection (from nerve injury), it may need to be removed to alleviate their symptoms and prevent harm to the adult teeth growing underneath. Your dentist will discuss with you how this can be done.

If the top front baby teeth need to be removed your child will be left with a gap until the adult tooth erupts (around seven years of age). Losing a front baby tooth early has not been found to affect the long term alignment of children's teeth or their speech.

What will happen to the adult teeth underneath?

If a primary (baby) tooth is injured there is a risk that the underlying permanent (adult) tooth may be harmed. This harm could be both from the original injury as well from infection from the baby tooth if the nerve dies in the injured tooth and it is left untreated. Regular follow up with your dentist is important following management of the injured baby tooth. They will continue to monitor your child's teeth especially around the time the adult top front teeth start to erupt (around seven years of age) to check for any problems.

What now?

We will discuss all appropriate treatment options with you and encourage you to ask any questions you may have.

We often seek the opinion of other specialist dentists to ensure we are continuing to provide your child with a high standard of care.

Helpful Resources

www.bspd.co.uk

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns about this, please contact the paediatric dental team on 020 8672 1255 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

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

Additional services

Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS can offer you on-the-spot advice and information when you have comments or concerns about our services or the care you have received. You can visit the PALS office between 9.30am and 4.30pm, Monday to Friday in the main corridor between Grosvenor and Lanesborough wings (near the lift foyer).

Tel: 020 8725 2453 **Email:** pals@stgeorges.nhs.uk

NHS Choices

NHS Choices provides online information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you make decisions about your health.

Web: www.nhs.uk

NHS 111

You can call 111 when you need medical help fast but it's not a 999 emergency. NHS 111 is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Calls are free from landlines and mobile phones.

Tel: 111

AccessAble

You can download accessibility guides for all our services by searching 'St George's Hospital' on the AccessAble website (www.accessable.co.uk). The guides are designed to ensure everyone – including those with accessibility needs – can access our hospital and community sites with confidence.



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