

Child's tooth knocked out from trauma

Baby teeth

Baby teeth start falling out naturally from 6 years old. If a baby tooth has been knocked out by injury then you must not put it back in, as this may damage the growing adult tooth. Suitable painkillers such as Calpol can be given for any discomfort. See your dentist later if you have any concerns.

Adult teeth

It may be possible to place an adult tooth that has been knocked out back into the socket successfully. This can only be done if the tooth is in one piece.

Time is of the essence, it must be replaced as soon as possible, no more than one hour.

Retrieve the tooth, check that it is one piece. DO NOT touch the root as this can damage the cells needed for it to reintegrate into the socket. If possible an adult at the scene can put it back in. If the tooth is clean put it in straightaway. Hold the tooth by the crown (the white shiny part normally seen in the mouth) make sure it is the right way around and push it gently back into the socket. Get the child to bite gently on a handkerchief and see a dentist as soon as possible. Go to the nearest Accident and Emergency Department if you cannot get to a dentist.

If the tooth is dirty then rinse it with milk. If you do not have these then use the child's saliva or cold water, do not scrub or use disinfectant it as again this will damage the cells needed for reintegration.

If you are unable to place it back in the socket then you must see a dentist as soon as possible. Go to your nearest Accident and Emergency department if you cannot get to a dentist. The tooth must be kept moist, ideally place it in milk. Do not put it in plain water as this will damage the cells whereas milk or even saline is better at preserving the cells. Putting it in the injured person's mouth between the cheek and gum can be done if milk and saline are not available.

Injuries like this most commonly occur when playing contact sports. Wearing a well fitting sports mouthguard made by your dentist is the best way to prevent such injuries.