

# Dental trauma

## Information for patients from the Maxillofacial Department



This leaflet will help you understand about the dental trauma you have experienced, what happens next, and how to look after your mouth in the weeks ahead.



## How do it look after my teeth now?

For the next two to four weeks

- Eat a soft diet
- Avoid eating hard foods and avoid habits such as nail biting or chewing gum
- Avoid biting on your front teeth
- Take painkillers (paracetamol or ibuprofen depending on what you usually take). Follow the recommended doses on the packet
- Rinse gently with Chlorhexidine mouthwash two to three times a day for seven to 14 days (available from any Pharmacy). Do not use this for longer than 14 days, as it will stain your teeth
- Brush your traumatised teeth gently using a soft brush
- If your splint becomes loose or breaks before splinting times, please see your dentist or contact us as soon as possible
- Finish your course of antibiotics, if you were prescribed any
- Check your tetanus status with your GP if your injury happened where there was soil

- Avoid contact sports until you are advised that it is safe. You **must** wear a mouth guard in the future to prevent future trauma to the teeth
- Attend follow-up appointments either with your dentist or at the hospital.

## What should I expect in the long term?

In the long term, injured teeth can become discoloured (black, grey, yellow, or red). They can also lose vitality (feeling in the nerve) and need root canal treatment.

The tooth can also be rejected, be eaten away, and become infected. This can happen several years after the dental trauma, therefore it is important to see your dentist regularly.

## How can I contact the department?

If you have any concerns about your teeth and would like some advice, please contact the Maxillofacial Department at William Harvey Hospital on 01233 633 331 extension 6045.

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff.

### What is dental trauma?

Dental trauma includes injury to the teeth, lips, gums, and tongue. It can happen at any time, anywhere, to anyone. It affects all age groups.

Dental trauma commonly occurs due to sporting injuries, road traffic accidents, and physical violence.

There are many types of dental trauma that can affect both baby teeth and permanent (adult) teeth.

### What type of trauma did I sustain?

There are three common types of injuries that can happen.

- 1. **Broken or fractured teeth** which can have sharp edges and be sensitive.



- 2. **Loose or displaced teeth** that have moved out of position but are still in the socket. These can interfere with your bite.



- 3. **Knocked out (avulsed) teeth** are when a tooth has completely come out of the socket and the mouth.



### What treatment will I need?

The treatment differs according to the type of trauma you sustained and whether your permanent or baby teeth were involved.

- **Broken or fractured teeth** are treated either by sticking your tooth fragments back on or building up your teeth with a white filling. This is done by your dentist.
- **Loose or displaced teeth** are treated by repositioning your teeth and splinting them for two to four weeks.
- **Knocked out or avulsed teeth** are placed back into the socket if they are permanent teeth and splinted for two to four weeks (see next page for more details about splinting). Root canal treatment will then be carried out either with your local dentist or in the hospital, as the nerve has been irreversibly damaged.

### What is a splint?

A splint is a metal wire which is held in position with white filling material to hold your traumatised teeth in position.



Depending on the type of injury, the splint will remain on your teeth for two to four weeks.

### What will happen next?

We will advise you whether you will be contacted for an appointment in the Maxillofacial Department at William Harvey Hospital (WHH) to continue your treatment or whether you should see your local dentist for ongoing treatment.

### What will happen when I come back to William Harvey Hospital?

During your follow-up appointments at WHH, we will take clinical photographs, carry out a full examination and any additional x-ray pictures needed to check for signs of infection.

We will keep you informed at every stage about the prognosis of your teeth. **You must continue to see your dentist even if we take you on for treatment at the hospital.**