

Dental trauma

Information for patients

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.

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.

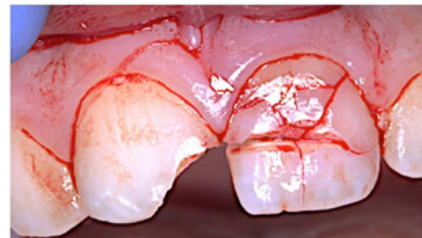
Dental trauma commonly happens because of a sporting injury, road traffic accident, or physical violence.

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.



(1)



(2)



(3)



What treatment will I need?

The treatment differs depending on 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 below 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 damaged 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 tell 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 take any additional x-ray pictures needed to check for signs of infection.

We will let you know 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.**

How do I 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.
- Rinse your mouth gently with Chlorhexidine mouthwash two to three times a day for seven to 14 days (Chlorhexidine is available from any Pharmacy). Do not use this mouthwash for longer than 14 days, as it will stain your teeth.

- Take painkillers (paracetamol or ibuprofen depending on what you usually take). Follow the recommended doses on the packet.
- Brush your traumatised teeth gently using a soft toothbrush.
- If your splint becomes loose or breaks before splinting times, please see your dentist or contact us as soon as possible.
- If you were prescribed antibiotics, finish your course.
- If your injury happened where there was soil, please check your tetanus status with your GP.
- Avoid contact sports until you are advised that it is safe. When playing contact sports in the future you **must** wear a mouth guard to prevent trauma to your teeth.
- Go to 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.

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

How can I contact the Maxillofacial 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 63 33 31 extension 60 45.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients

If you would like this information in **another language, audio, Braille, Easy Read, or large print** please ask a member of staff. You can ask someone to contact us on your behalf.

Any complaints, comments, concerns, or compliments please speak to your doctor or nurse, or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 01227 78 31 45, or email ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net

Patients should not bring in large sums of money or valuables into hospital. Please note that East Kent Hospitals accepts no responsibility for the loss or damage to personal property, unless the property had been handed in to Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals web site www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patientinformation