



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.

What is dental trauma?

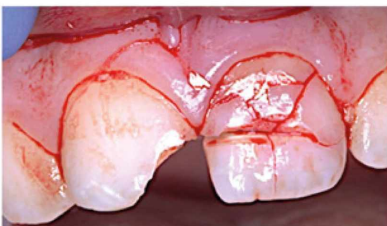
Dental trauma includes injury to the teeth, lips, gums, and tongue. It can happen at any time, anywhere, to anyone. It affects all age groups.

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.



Broken or fractured teeth



Loose or displaced teeth



Knocked-out (avulsed) teeth

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 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.



A splint holding damaged teeth in position

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 633331 extension 723-6045.

This leaflet has been produced with and for patients.

Please let us know:

- If you have any accessibility needs; this includes needing a hearing loop or wanting someone to come with you to your appointment.
- If you need an interpreter.
- If you need this information in another format (such as Braille, audio, large print or Easy Read).

You can let us know this by:

- Visiting the Trust web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/ais>).
- Calling the number at the top of your appointment letter.
- Adding this information to the Patient Portal (<https://pp.ekhuft.nhs.uk/login>).
- Telling a member of staff at your next appointment.

Any complaints, comments, concerns or compliments, please speak to a member of your healthcare team. Or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service on 01227 783145 or email (ekh-tr.pals@nhs.net).

Patients should not bring 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 has been handed into Trust staff for safe-keeping.

Further patient information leaflets are available via the East Kent Hospitals' web site (<https://www.ekhuft.nhs.uk/patient-information>).

Reference number: Web 505

First published:
September 2022

Last reviewed:
October 2022

Next review date:
February 2026

Copyright © East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust.