

What To Do With Common Injuries

What if you and some friends were playing an informal game of basketball and one of your friends was struck down by a hard jab to the mouth? Could you help? What if you were the one to fall face down, only to find blood pouring from your aching nose? Would anyone with you know basic first aid?

It is important to be prepared in case such misfortune takes place. Three dental specialties, the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS), American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) and American Association of Orthodontists (AAO), offer the following first aid tips to assist you in case an accident occurs:

Broken tooth

- Clean the injured area and apply ice.
- Save the tip of the tooth (for possible reattachment) and call your dentist right away.

Knocked out teeth

- See your dentist immediately.
- Upon locating the tooth, hold it by the crown (the wide part, not the pointed end/root).
- Rinse the tooth but avoid rubbing it or touching the root.
- Put the tooth back in its socket; cover with gauze or and wn stabilize it. Or, briefly store the tooth in cold milk or salt water, or between the cheek and gum.
- Do not let the tooth dry out. A tooth can usually be saved if cared for properly and reimplanted within an hour.

Facial cuts

- Cover the wound with a clean dressing and apply pressure.
- Dressing may become saturated; do not remove it. Apply more dressing and pressure.
- Go to a nearby hospital for emergency assistance.

Cuts inside of the mouth

- Gently rinse the mouth with cold water.
- Bite on some gauze, a clean cloth or tissue and apply pressure to the wound.
- Go to the closest hospital emergency department for immediate treatment.

Jaw injury

The U-shaped lower jaw often suffers multiple breaks. An upper jaw fracture may cause visible distortion of the face.

If teeth fit together properly when the mouth is closed:

- Apply ice to control swelling and take ibuprofen or a similar remedy to control pain.

- Restrict diet to soft foods and if no improvement occurs within 24 hours, seek dental care.

If teeth do not fit together properly when the mouth is closed:

- Immediately seek emergency care.
- Gently align the jaws.
- Immobilize the jaw; wrap a cloth bandage under the chin and secure it over the head.
- Apply ice to control swelling.

Broken nose

- **Gently pack the nose with gauze or tissue.**
- Apply ice. Do not blow nose.

Head and neck injury

- Do not let the injured person be moved unless done by professionals or if in danger.
- Immobilize the head by placing rolled towels on either side.
- Avoid risk of shock by keeping the injured person warm.
- If unconscious, clear the person's mouth and hold their tongue forward to maintain an open airway. Seek emergency care.

The AAOMS, AAPD and AAO are sponsors of "April is National Facial Protection Month." For further information and materials on this annual observance, visit the associations' Web sites at aaoms.org, aapd.org, and braces.org.

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