



Managing Your Dental Pain at Home

What Counts as a Dental Emergency?

Non-Urgent	Urgent	Straight to A&E
Treat at home, or call usual dental practice for further advice	Call your usual dental practice for advice first	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facial swelling affecting vision or breathing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loose or lost crowns, bridges or veneers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facial swelling extending to eye or neck. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trauma causing loss of consciousness, double vision or vomiting.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broken, rubbing or loose dentures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bleeding following an extraction that does not stop after 20 mins solid pressure with gauze/clean hankie. A small amount of oozing is normal, just like if you had a grazed knee. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bleeding gums. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bleeding due to trauma. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Broken, lose or lost fillings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trauma resulting in a tooth being knocked out of the socket, or a large fracture resulting from trauma and causing severe pain. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chipped teeth with no pain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Significant toothache preventing sleep or eating, associated with significant swelling, or fever that cannot be managed with painkillers. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Loose orthodontic wires 		



Mouth pain

For pain relief we advise, unless unsuitable for you:

- Paracetamol
- Ibuprofen

Combining paracetamol and ibuprofen can improve its effectiveness.

There is no strong evidence that drugs like ibuprofen can make COVID-19 (coronavirus) worse.

All painkillers should be taken in accordance with instructions on the packet. Do not take more than is recommended.

Toothache

If the tooth is extremely sensitive to hot or cold, this may be a sign of decay and antibiotics will not help. These at-home measures may help assist with pain management until you can see a dentist:

- Good cleaning with fluoride toothpaste and reducing sugar intake will help stop decay from getting any worse.
- For lost fillings or cracked teeth temporary filling material can be packed into the space to help reduce symptoms. These are widely available both online and from supermarkets or pharmacies.
- Toothpaste aimed at reducing tooth sensitivity, (e.g. Colgate Sensitive Pro-Relief or Sensodyne Repair and Protect) may also help reduce pain. Rub the toothpaste directly on to the affected area and do not rinse.
- Anaesthetic gel such as Orajel can also help ease the pain.



Wisdom Teeth

Wisdom tooth pain is usually due to inflammation of the gum over the erupting tooth, which is often made worse by the trauma of biting, so introducing a soft food diet will help with the pain. Most flare-ups can be managed with good home care and should settle within in a few days to a week. You should:

- Thoroughly clean the area even if it is painful or bleeds when brushing the affected area , this process will encourage healing.
- Warm salty mouthwashes is our preference to help with alleviating pain. Using a product such as Corsodyl mouthwash will help with alleviating pain but avoid using for longer than a week as it may cause staining of the teeth.

If you have difficulty swallowing:

- Swelling in your face or cheek
- Difficulty opening your mouth
- Become generally unwell

Call your dentist for advice. You may need antibiotics if an infection is spreading. Mouth

Ulcers

Most mouth ulcers will heal within 7-10 days. A dentist or doctor should assess non-healing ulcers/oral lesions present for more than 3 weeks. Please call your practice for guidance if required; otherwise follow the home measures described below:

- Warm salty mouth washes 2-3 times daily
- Excellent cleaning and be gentle, we advise using a soft/baby toothbrush
- Difflam (Benzydamine) Spray or mouthwash as instructed on the packaging
- Soft diet
- Painkillers (see above)
- Rubbing Dentures; fix with denture adhesives (e.g. Poligrip or Fixodent), remove sharp edges using an emery board or leave out when possible
- Corsodyl mouthwash (avoid use for more than 1 week as may cause staining)

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Pain or bleeding after an extraction

Take regular painkillers for several days after an extraction. Antibiotics can only be given if infection is present.

If you found some pink spit/oozing this is normal after a tooth extraction. If the socket is bleeding freely, bite hard on gauze or a clean hankie for 20 minutes. If bleeding still doesn't stop, please call us.

If you smoke or rinse too soon after an extraction you risk a dry socket. This can be very painful and regular painkillers are unlikely to be effective. You should call us for further advice.

Bleeding Gums

Bleeding from gums is NOT a dental emergency and is usually due to gum disease. This will not stop until your brushing technique improves.

- Brush twice daily with fluoride toothpaste for 2 minutes, especially the areas that are bleeding.

- Floss or interdental brushes to clean between your teeth every day.

If your gums are extremely painful and look infected (bright red with a grey/green appearance) you should still try your best to brush them even though they will bleed. Take painkillers as required and use mouthwashes such as chlorhexidine or peroxy which can be purchased from your pharmacist.

Lost Crown

1. Clean and check the crown. If the crown is mostly hollow, you can attempt to re-cement it at home if you feel confident to do so.
2. Remove any debris from the crown; you can use something like the tip of a clean paperclip to scrape the old cement away. Clean your tooth thoroughly; all debris should be removed from the crown and the tooth for the crown to seat properly.
3. Check the crown fits without cement. Check carefully that the bite feels correct, if the tooth feels too tall or proud, it is not fitted correctly, double check for debris. Never try to force a crown or post onto your tooth, this can cause the root to fracture. If you cannot get the crown to fit, keep the tooth as clean as possible and wait to see your dentist.
4. Crowns should be re-fixed back onto the tooth using a dental cement from a pharmacy like Recapit. DO NOT USE SUPERGLUE or FIXADENT to fit your crown.
5. Once you have practiced placing the crown, dry the tooth and crown, mix the cement as instructed on the packet and fill the crown. Place the crown directly onto the tooth and bite firmly to press it into place.
6. Remove any excess cement with a toothpick and floss between your teeth to make sure they do not stick together.



Fractured or knocked out teeth

1. If a tooth has been chipped and is sensitive and/or sharp then applying a sensitive toothpaste or using an emergency repair kit is advised.
2. If a baby tooth has been knocked out, do not attempt to put it back in. Clean the area, bite on a clean hankie or towel for 20 minutes if it is bleeding, give the child age appropriate pain relief medicine and keep to a soft diet until the area has healed.
3. If an adult tooth has been knocked out
 - handle the tooth by its crown (the white part), avoid touching the root
 - if the tooth is dirty, wash it briefly (10 seconds) under cold running water
 - try to re-implant the tooth in its socket and then bite gently on a handkerchief to hold it in position
 - if this is not feasible, store the tooth for transportation to the designated urgent dental care centre in milk (not water). Alternatively transport the tooth in the mouth, keeping it between molars and the inside of the cheek.
 - You need to telephone for an emergency dental appointment

Orthodontic / brace problems

The British Orthodontic Society advise that most orthodontic appliances can be left for some months without detriment if you continue with the usual after care instructions;

- Exemplary oral hygiene – brushing 3 times a day with their standard toothbrush, followed by interproximal brush use. You can also use a fluoride mouth rinse e.g. Fluoriguard (225ppm), once a day.
- Low sugar diet - where possible avoid snacking on foods and drinks with ADDED SUGAR. Fizzy drinks should be avoided in particular.
- Avoid sticky and hard foodstuffs that could break the brace wire or fracture brackets off a tooth. Patients may in the coming weeks experience pain, problems and loose wires. At present, the best advice is to avoid all but the most essential mouth procedures to limit spread of the disease to the wider population.

If you suspect that you may have swallowed or inhaled a piece of your brace, you must call for advice.

A small piece of brace will normally pass through even if you have swallowed it. For advice on managing common orthodontic/brace problems and solutions visit the British Orthodontic Society website (www.bos.org.uk)

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Useful videos

Manual tooth brush technique:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L29xEct6BCs>

Electric tooth brush technique:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UUXAivWbnOw>

Floss:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=44TF4Zsz3-s>

Interdental brushes daily:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y6FhYiEMbIY>

Tooth brush heads:

<https://youtu.be/DlDxmmf30>

X-floss technique:

<https://youtu.be/ox26LW3v3Kk>

How to use plaque disclosing tablets:

<https://youtu.be/n2T3n8olEmw>

How to clean dentures:

<https://youtu.be/nl7uaeO1BZk>

How to check for oral cancer:

<https://youtu.be/MjK3SdS7lUc>

Your diet and teeth:

<https://youtu.be/DGNu-n8VXlw>

Oral hygiene for braces:

<https://youtu.be/GtSi2lcfynE>