Knocked-out tooth: don't touch the root, put it in milk.

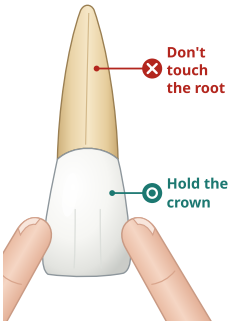
Injured teeth can often be saved if treated quickly and properly.[1] Even at night or on a holiday, get seen as soon as you can. If possible, go to the emergency department of a hospital with an oral surgery department.

! If the person **hit their head, is not fully alert, or feels nauseous**, see a doctor before dealing with the teeth.[1]

If a tooth is knocked out

Time out of the mouth and how it was kept matter most[1]

1. **Stay calm and find the tooth**[2]
2. **Hold it by the crown (the white part). Don't touch the root**[2]
   The root surface still has cells that attach the tooth to the bone
3. **If it's dirty, rinse it briefly in milk or saline**[2]
   Don't scrub it
4. **Put it in cold milk**[1]
   Regular milk is best; avoid long-life (UHT) or low-fat milk
5. **No milk?** Keep it from drying out: a tooth storage solution, saline, or plastic wrap[1][2]
6. **Go to a dentist right away**[2]



To protect the cells on the root surface

What not to do

- **Scrub it**
  This damages the important cells on the root surface[2]
- **Wrap it in a tissue or handkerchief**
  If it dries out, the cells on the root die[2]
- **Leave it in tap water**
  Water isn't good for storing teeth (though it's better than letting it dry) [2][3]

No number of minutes is guaranteed to be safe. The sooner, the better.

~15min	Put back on the spot within this time: the root cells are likely still alive
60+min	Kept dry this long: the cells are unlikely to survive[2]

International guidelines also recommend putting the tooth back in its socket on the spot.[2] But this is hard if you're not used to it, so **don't force it — put the tooth in milk and get to a dentist quickly**.

If a child's baby tooth is knocked out

A baby tooth is not put back if this could damage the adult tooth growing underneath.[1] But don't just wait and see because "it's only a baby tooth": an injury to a baby tooth can affect the adult tooth below.[1] **See a dentist even for baby teeth.**

If a tooth is chipped

Don't throw away the broken piece — bring it with you, in water so it doesn't dry out.[1] Even if it's only a small chip or doesn't hurt, see a dentist right away. Whether the chip is close to the nerve can't be judged without looking.

From your clinic A clinic stamp is fine for contact details

Phone _____ **Injury** ☐ Chipped ☐ Cracked root ☐ Loose ☐ Displaced ☐ Knocked out

Hours _____ **Today** ☐ Rebuilt ☐ Nerve treatment ☐ Put back & splinted ☐ Watch

Injured tooth _____ **Next check** ☐ 1 month ☐ 3 months ☐ 1 year Date: Time:

References [1] Japanese Society of Dental Traumatology. Guidelines for the treatment of traumatic dental injuries (revised Oct 2023). [2] Fouad AF, et al. International Association of Dental Traumatology guidelines for the management of traumatic dental injuries: 2. Avulsion of permanent teeth. Dent Traumatol. 2020;36(4):331-342. [3] Zhang N, et al. Network Meta-Analysis of 10 Storage Mediums for Preserving Avulsed Teeth. Front Med (Lausanne). 2021;8:749278.

Written by a practising dentist (Zubora Ha Lab, Japan) · November 2026 edition

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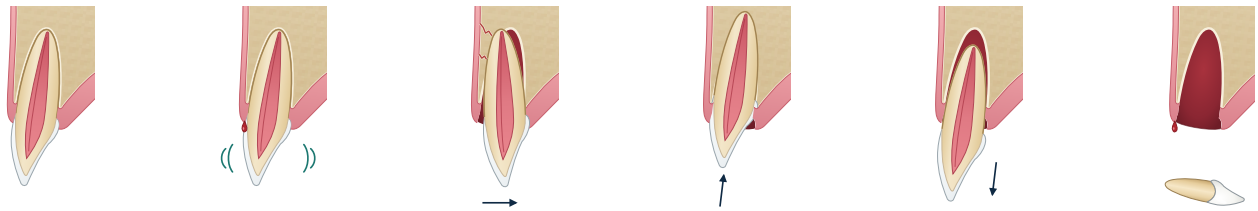
Even if it doesn't hurt, we follow it for a year.

Types of injury and treatment

Looks alone can't tell, so get checked



Normal
Sits in its socket in the bone

Subluxation
Same position, but loose

Lateral luxation
Pushed sideways. The bone may break

Intrusion
Pushed in. Looks shorter

Extrusion
Pushed out. Looks longer

Avulsion
Knocked out completely

Socket where the tooth sat · Bone that holds the tooth · Crack in the bone

An upper front tooth seen from the side. The left side is the lip side. Shapes are simplified.

Chipped crown fracture (visible part)
The dentist: reattaches the piece or rebuilds the shape with white resin; treats the nerve if it is exposed[1]

Cracked root fracture (inside the gum)
The dentist: it is hard to see, so it is checked by X-ray. If shifted, it is put back and splinted[1]

Loose subluxation
The dentist: usually watches it. If biting hurts, it is splinted for 1–2 weeks[1]

Shifted, pushed in or out luxation
The dentist: puts it back as soon as possible and splints it[1]

Knocked out avulsion
The dentist: puts it back (replantation) as soon as possible and splints it[1]

Several teeth move together possible fracture of the bone
The dentist: puts the bone back in place and splints it[1]

1 year
at least — how long an injured tooth is followed

Even if it seems fine right after the injury, the tooth may later turn **dark or gray**. If the blood vessels supplying the nerve are torn and the nerve dies, the tooth changes color. Then root canal treatment is done.[1] This can happen even if the tooth was only loose. **It is checked at 1 month and 3 months, then followed for at least a year.**[1]

When to see a dentist

All of these: go right away Even at night or on a holiday

- **A tooth is knocked out, shifted or pushed in**
- **A chip shows a pink spot (the nerve)**[1]
- A small chip, even if painless (bring the piece)
- Later turns **dark or gray**[1]
- **Several teeth move together**, or a cut in the gum won't stop bleeding[1]
- **A tooth is loose or hurts when biting**
- No change in looks or pain (still have it followed for a year)[1]

Be prepared In contact sports such as rugby, martial arts and basketball, wearing a mouthguard is linked to fewer dental injuries.[4] For places where milk isn't handy, such as club activities or camping, it's a good idea to keep a tooth storage solution in your first-aid kit.

Clinic contact (stamp is fine)

Notes

References

[1] Japanese Society of Dental Traumatology. Guidelines for the treatment of traumatic dental injuries (revised Oct 2023). [2] Fouad AF, et al. Dent Traumatol. 2020;36(4):331-342. [3] Zhang N, et al. Front Med (Lausanne). 2021;8:749278. [4] Fernandes LM, et al. The use of mouthguards and prevalence of dento-alveolar trauma among athletes: A systematic review and meta-analysis. Dent Traumatol. 2019;35(1):54-72.

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