

If you can't see your dentist right way, you should go to a hospital. If you or someone you know sustains a dental injury, it's important to contact your dentist right away.

### What should I do if tissue in my child's mouth is injured?

If your child experiences a tear, cut, puncture wound, or laceration on his or her cheek, lips, or tongue, immediately clean the wound with warm water.

Bleeding from a tongue laceration can be reduced by pulling the tongue forward and using gauze to place pressure on the wound.

Visit an oral surgeon for emergency care as soon as possible, or go to the emergency room if you cannot see an oral surgeon right away.

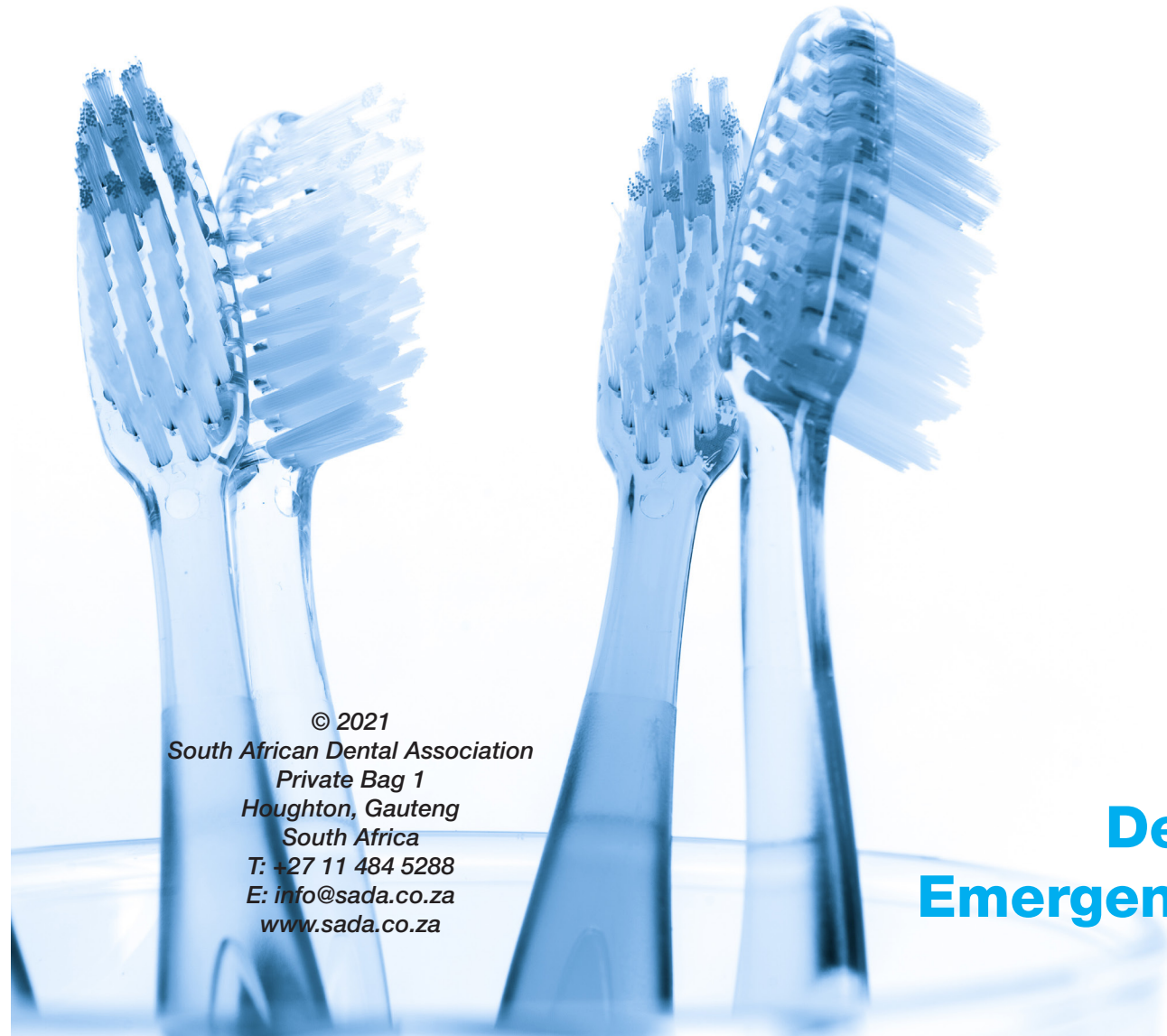
**For more information about dental emergencies, speak with your general dentist.**

*Patient Education  
Information  
brought to you by*



**SADA**

THE SOUTH AFRICAN  
DENTAL ASSOCIATION



© 2021

South African Dental Association

Private Bag 1

Houghton, Gauteng

South Africa

T: +27 11 484 5288

E: [info@sada.co.za](mailto:info@sada.co.za)

[www.sada.co.za](http://www.sada.co.za)

**Dental  
Emergencies**

## Dental emergencies

Dental emergencies can happen at any time. Oral injuries can be painful and should be treated by your dentist as soon as possible.

### What are dental emergencies and how can I avoid them?

A dental emergency is when your tooth breaks, cracks, becomes loose, or is knocked out completely. Sometimes, a dental crown can come off your tooth, or your lips, gums, or cheeks can be cut.

Some emergencies can be avoided if you take simple precautions, such as wearing a mouthguard while you're playing sports and avoiding hard foods that can crack or break your teeth.

What should I do if my tooth is knocked out?

Your tooth will have the best chance of surviving trauma if you see your dentist within one hour of the incident—so call immediately for an appointment. Handle your displaced tooth by its crown (the top), not by its root (the pointed part on the bottom).

Touching the root of your tooth can damage the cells that are necessary to reattach your tooth to the bone. Gently rinse your tooth in water to remove dirt. Do not scrub!

Then place your clean tooth in your mouth between your cheek and gum to keep it moist. If it is not possible to store your tooth in your mouth, wrap it in a clean cloth or gauze, and immerse it in milk or saline solution (used for contact lenses). If your child has knocked out a baby tooth, the tooth should not be replanted. However, your child should visit the dentist immediately to ensure no broken pieces of the tooth remain in his or her mouth.

### What should I do if my child's tooth is knocked out?

Your child's tooth will have the best chance of surviving dental trauma if you see your dentist within one hour of any emergency—so call immediately for an appointment. Handle the tooth by the crown (the top), not by the root (the pointed part on the bottom); touching the root could damage cells that are necessary to reattach the tooth to the bone.

Gently rinse the tooth in water to remove dirt, but do not scrub it. Place the clean tooth in your child's mouth between the cheek and gum to keep it moist. It is important not to let the tooth dry out, so if your child can't keep it in his or her mouth, wrap it in a clean cloth or gauze and immerse it in milk or the child's own saliva until you get to your dentist's office.

If your child has a baby tooth knocked out, the tooth should not be replanted. However, your child should visit the dentist immediately to ensure no broken pieces of the tooth remain.

### What should I do if my tooth is pushed out of position?

If your tooth is loose and pushed out of position, call your dentist right away to schedule an emergency appointment. In the meantime, you can attempt to reposition the tooth to its normal alignment using light finger pressure—but don't force it!

### What should I do if my child's tooth is chipped or fractured?

There are different types of tooth fractures. Chipped teeth are minor fractures. Moderate fractures involve damage to the enamel, tissue, and/or pulp. A severely fractured tooth usually has been traumatized to the point that it cannot be recovered.

If your child fractures a tooth, rinse his or her mouth with warm water and use an ice pack or cold compress to reduce swelling.

Contact your dentist immediately. He or she can smooth minor tooth fractures with a sandpaper disc, but some fractures may require restorative procedures. If you can find the broken tooth fragment, bring it with you to the dentist.

### How should I handle a chipped or fractured tooth?

There are different types of tooth fractures. Chipped teeth are minor fractures, while damage to your enamel, tissue, and/or pulp indicates a moderate fracture.

Sustaining a severe fracture usually means that your tooth has been traumatized to the point that it cannot be saved.

If you fracture a tooth, rinse your mouth with warm water and use an ice pack or cold compress to reduce the swelling. Also, take ibuprofen—not aspirin—for pain, and call your dentist to schedule an appointment as soon as possible.

Your dentist can smooth minor tooth fractures, but some fractures may require restorative procedures. If you can find the broken tooth fragment, bring it with you to the dentist.

### What should I do if the tissue in my mouth is injured?

Serious injuries inside your mouth include tears or cuts, puncture wounds, and lacerations to your cheeks, lips, or tongue.

Any wound to the inside of your mouth should be cleaned with warm water, and you should contact your dentist immediately.