WHAT IS A DENTAL EMERGENCY?

NOT URGENT (MAY NEED TO WAIT):

- Loose or lost crowns, bridges or veneers.
- Broken, rubbing or loose dentures.
- Bleeding gums.
- Broken, loose or lost fillings.
- Chipped teeth with no pain.
- Loose orthodontic wires.

STRAIGHT TO A&E:

- Facial swelling affecting vision or breathing, preventing mouth opening more than 2 fingers width.
- Trauma causing loss of consciousness, double vision or vomiting.

URGENT DENTAL APPOINTMENT:

- Facial swelling extending to eye or neck.
- Bleeding following an extraction that does not stop after 20 mins pressure with a gauze/clean hankie. A small amount of blood is normal, just like if you had grazed your knee.
- Bleeding due to trauma.
- Tooth broken and causing pain, or tooth fallen out.
- Significant toothache preventing sleep, eating, associated with significant swelling, or fever that cannot be managed with painkillers.

ACCESSING CARE

Following recent guidance from NHS England and the Department of Health, dental practices have been advised to **stop aerosol sprays** and **prioritise urgent treatment**.

As well as reducing risk to staff and patients, this will also prevent unnecessary travel in an attempt to reduce virus transmission. This information aims to advise people in pain who still need to access care and also support people in managing minor symptoms at home.

IF YOU NEED TO ACCESS EMERGENCY CARE:

- **Have you or anyone in your house been self isolating?**
- **Do you have any symptoms?**
- **High temperature or continuous cough?**

If YES to any of the above, CALL 111. They will direct you to an emergency facility with appropriate protective equipment which will allow staff to treat you safely.

USING PAINKILLERS

FOR DENTAL PAIN:

Anti-inflammatories (like ibuprofen) can help reduce sensitivity from teeth. Make sure you take ibuprofen with or after food. Combining paracetamol and ibuprofen has also been shown to be effective.

If you have **no coronavirus symptoms**, carry on taking ibuprofen as normal.

FOR TREATING ANY COVID-19 SYMPTOMS:

There is currently no strong evidence that drugs like ibuprofen can make COVID-19 worse, but the NHS is still evaluating this. Until we have more information, **take paracetamol to treat symptoms of coronavirus**, unless your doctor has told you paracetamol is not suitable for you.

(Info updated: 20 March 2020)

Always read the instructions and follow them. Taking more than the accepted dose will not improve the symptoms and can make you ill. Taking too many tablets and can cause serious stomach and liver injury.

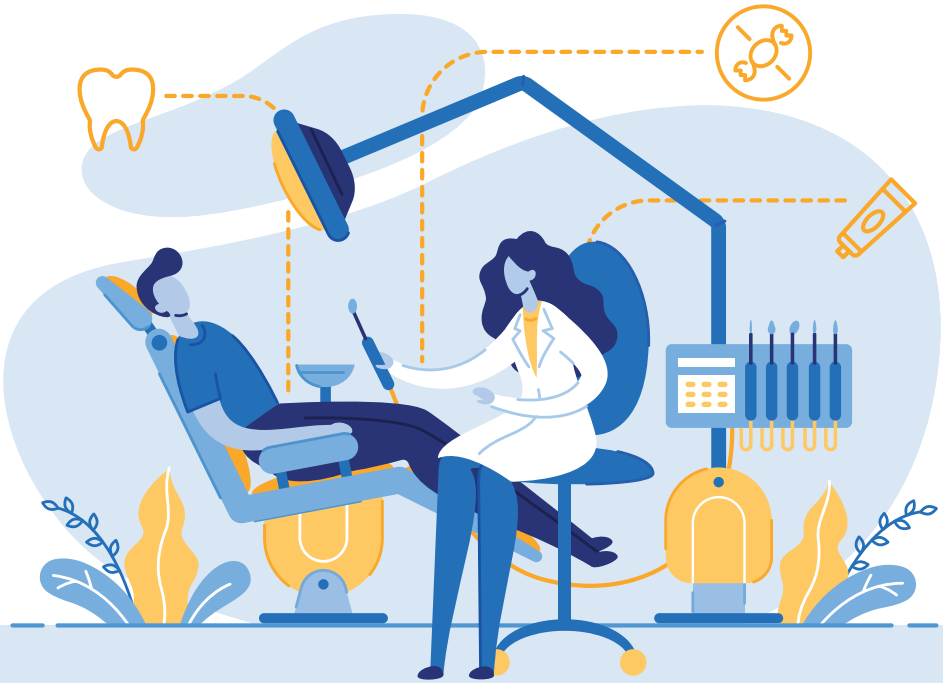
BE GENTLE WITH YOUR CROWN

If the crown doesn't fit easily, don't force it. Arrange for a dental appointment as soon as possible, and clean fastidiously in the mean-time.

LOST A CROWN?

1. Clean and check the crown. If the crown is mostly hollow, you can try to re-cement it at home if you feel confident to do so.
2. Remove any debris from the crown so that it sits properly. You can use something like the tip of a paperclip to scrape the old cement away. Clean your tooth thoroughly.
3. Check the crown fits without cement. Does the bite feel correct? If the tooth feels too tall, it's not fitting correctly. Check for debris inside the crown. NEVER force a crown or post onto your tooth; this can cause the root to fracture. If you can't get the crown to fit, don't panic. Keep the tooth clean and wait until you can see a dentist. Protect the exposed tooth in the meantime as best you can.
4. Crowns should be replaced using a dental cement from a pharmacy like *Recapit*. DO NOT USE SUPERGLUE or FIXADENT to fit your crown.
5. Once you are 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. Bite firmly to press it into place.
6. Remove any extra cement with a toothpick and floss between your teeth to make sure they do not stick together.

MANAGING TOOTHACHE

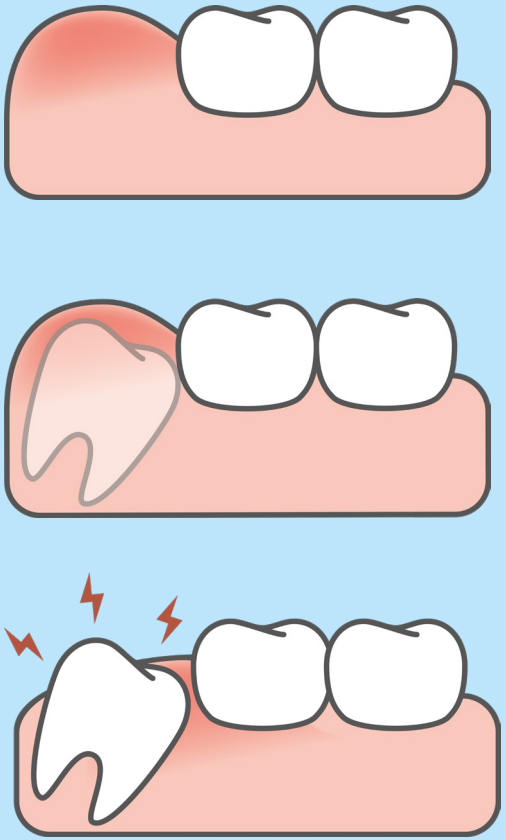


PAINFUL TOOTH THAT'S SENSITIVE TO HOT/COLD?

Antibiotics will not help with sensitivity. Usually extreme sensitivity means that there is decay, which must be removed and filled. These home measures may help make symptoms manageable until care can be arranged:

- Regular cleaning with fluoride toothpaste after meals.
- Desensitising/sensitive toothpaste (like sensodyne repair and protect). Rub toothpaste directly on the affected area and do not rinse afterwards.
- Reducing sugar intake stops decay worsening.
- If there is a hole/crack in the tooth, a temporary filling can be packed into the space. These are widely available from supermarkets and pharmacies.
- Anaesthetic gel such as Orajel can help ease pain.

MANAGING WISDOM TOOTH PAIN



PAINFUL TOOTH AND SORE/ENFLAMED GUMS?

Wisdom tooth pain is usually due to inflammation of the gum over the erupting tooth, which can be worsened by trauma from biting. Most flare ups should settle in a few days to a week, and can be managed with good home care:

- Excellent cleaning (even if it is painful to brush, the area must be kept clean to encourage healing).
- Corsodyl mouthwash (avoid use for more than one week as this may cause staining).
- Soft diet (soft food will reduce trauma from biting).
- Painkillers (following packet instructions).
- Warm salty mouthwash.

If you have difficulty swallowing, swelling in your face or cheek or difficulty opening your mouth, call your dentist. You may need antibiotics if an infection is spreading.

MANAGING MOUTH ULCERS

PAINFUL ULCER GETTING YOU DOWN?

Although painful, most ulcers will heal within 7-10 days. If an ulcer or oral lesion doesn't heal after 3 weeks, it should be assessed by a dentist or doctor. Discomfort form ulcers can be relieved with:

- Warm salty mouthwash.
- Excellent cleaning (even if it is painful to brush, the mouth must be kept clean to encourage healing and prevent more ulcers forming).
- Difflam (Benzydamine) spray or mouthwash as needed.
- Soft diet (soft food will reduce trauma from biting).
- Painkillers (following packet instructions).
- Rubbing dentures, if present. Any sharp edges can be removed using an emery board. Denture adhesives like fixodent may help secure a loose denture. Remove dentures when possible if causing trauma.
- Corsodyl mouthwash (avoid use for over a week as may cause staining).

MANAGING PAIN AFTER EXTRACTION

Continue to take regular painkillers for several days after extraction; it is normal for the pain to be at its worst at day 3-4. Some pink spit/oozing is normal after an extraction, but if the socket is bleeding freely, bite hard on gauze or a clean hankie for 20 minutes. If bleeding has not stopped, call your dentist.

We cannot provide antibiotics for pain after extractions unless infection is present. We also cannot prescribe antibiotics over the phone without seeing you in person.

If you smoke or rinse too soon after an extraction, you risk a dry socket. This can be very painful and regular painkillers or antibiotics are unlikely to be effective. You should call your dentist for an emergency appointment.

Bleeding from gums is NOT a dental emergency. Bleeding gums are usually due to gum disease, and will not stop until brushing improves. Brush 2x a day with fluoride toothpaste for 2 minutes, concentrating especially on the areas that are bleeding. Use floss or te-pe brushes to clean between your teeth every day.