

Managing toothache at home

Tips to help you manage your dental problem until you can see a dentist

ACCESSING CARE

Following recent guidance from NHS England and the Department of Health, dental practices have been advised to stop seeing all patients, and to implement a triage service during this Coronavirus pandemic. As well as reducing risk to staff and patients, this will also prevent unnecessary travel to reduce virus transmission.

This information aims to advise people in pain and support people managing minor symptoms at home

If you need to access emergency dental care:

- Have you or anyone in your house been self isolating?
- Do you have any symptoms of COVID-19?
- 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.



What counts as a dental emergency?

Urgent dental treatment

- Facial swelling extending to eye or neck
- Bleeding following an extraction that does not stop after 20 mins solid pressure with a gauze/clean hankie. Oozing is normal.
- Bleeding due to trauma
- Tooth broken and causing pain, or tooth fallen out
- Significant toothache preventing sleep, eating, associated with swelling, or fever that cannot be managed with painkillers.

Straight to A and E

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

Non 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 and brackets

Painkillers

Paracetamol is the best pain relief to take with dental pain.

Any painkiller should be taken in accordance with instructions on the packet. Taking too many tablets, or taking medications incorrectly, **will not improve your symptoms,**

And can cause serious stomach and liver injury which can be life threatening.



Wisdom teeth

Wisdom tooth pain is usually due to inflammation of the gum over the erupting tooth, which can be worsened by trauma by biting.

Most flare ups can be managed with good home care and should settle in a few days to a week.

Excellent cleaning- even if sore the area must be brushed to keep clean and encourage healing

Corsodyl mouthwash- avoid using for more than one week as can cause staining

Soft diet- will reduce trauma from biting

Pain killers- paracetamol following the packet instructions



Warm salty mouthwash

If you have difficulty swallowing, swelling in your face or difficulty opening your mouth, call your dentist. You may need antibiotics.

Ulcers

Although painful, most ulcers will heal within 7-10 days. Non healing ulcers/oral lesions present for more than 3 weeks should be assessed by a dentist.

Warm salty mouthwash

Excellent cleaning- even if sore the area must be brushed to keep clean and encourage healing, try a soft toothbrush

Diffiam (benzydamine spray or mouthwash)-as needed

Soft diet-will reduce trauma from biting

Painkillers-paracetamol following the packet instructions

Rubbing dentures- Denture adhesives like Fixodent may help secure a loose denture. Any sharp edges can be removed using an emery board. Remove dentures when possible.



Corsodyl mouthwash-avoid using for more than one week as can cause staining

Pain or bleeding after an extraction

Continue to take regular painkillers for several days after extraction, it is normal for the pain to worsen at day 3-4.

We cannot provide antibiotics for pain after extractions unless an infection is present.

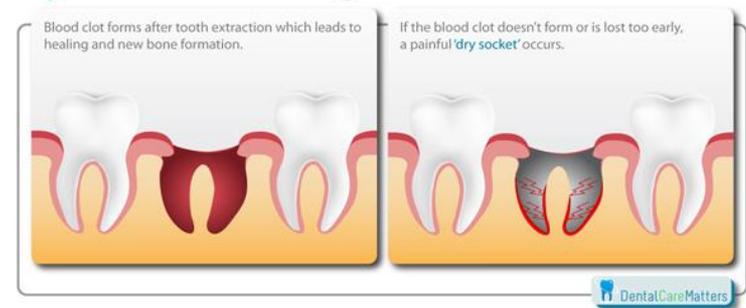
Some pink spit/oozing is normal after an extraction, but if the socket is bleeding freely, bite hard on gauze or a clean hankie for 20 mins. If bleeding has not stopped call your dentist.

Bleeding gums

Bleeding gums are NOT a dental emergency. They are usually due to gum disease. Brush at least 2x a day with fluoride toothpaste for 2 minutes. Concentrate on the areas that are bleeding. Use floss and te-pe brushes every day.

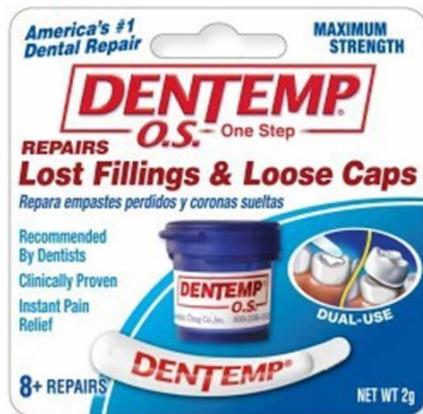
If you smoke or rinse too soon after an extraction, you risk a dry socket. This can be very painful and regular painkillers are unlikely to be effective. You should contact your dentist for advice.

Dry Socket Following Tooth Extraction



Lost crown

- Clean and check the crown. If the crown is mostly hollow you can attempt to re-cement it at home if you feel confident.
- Remove any debris from the crown. You can use the tip of a paperclip to scrape the old cement away. Clean your tooth thoroughly.
- Check that it fits onto the tooth and that the bite feels correct. Do not force it onto the tooth as this may cause the tooth to break.
- Crowns should only be replaced using a dental cement from a pharmacy. **Do not use superglue.**
- 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 onto your tooth and bite firmly to press into place.
- Remove excess cement with a toothpick and floss between your teeth.



Orthodontics – braces

General Soreness That Can Arise With Braces

Your teeth may become sore after braces are first placed in your mouth and after adjustments. This discomfort is normal, and should subside completely within two to three days.



Rinsing your mouth with warm salt water or taking an over-the-counter pain reliever, such as paracetamol, will usually provide immediate relief.

Soreness Related To Orthodontic Appliances

If a tie wire is irritating your mouth, cover it with wax or tuck it under the arch wire with a blunt object like a pencil eraser.

A loose band or bracket can generally be left in place.

A broken or poking archwire can often be bent in with a pencil erasure or cut with nail clippers.

The British orthodontic Society website has some useful tips on managing broken braces <https://www.bos.org.uk/>