



CareGuard Initiative

Can a Broken Tooth Be Saved

Breaking a tooth can be frightening, especially when it affects your smile or makes eating uncomfortable. The good news is that a broken tooth can often be repaired. A break does not automatically mean the tooth needs to be removed.

Treatment depends on the size and location of the damage and whether the tissue inside the tooth is affected.

How a Dentist Can Repair It

Depending on the injury, a dentist may:

- Reattach the broken fragment.
- Restore the tooth with a filling.
- Place a crown to cover and protect it.
- Perform root canal treatment if the damage reaches the inner tissue.

A dental examination is needed to decide which option is appropriate.

What to Do First

Call a dentist and describe what happened. Mention pain, swelling, bleeding, or whether the tooth feels loose.

While waiting for care:

- Gently rinse your mouth with warm water.
- If you find the broken piece, place it in a clean container with milk and bring it to your appointment.
- Apply a cold compress to the outside of your face if there is swelling.
- Choose soft foods and avoid chewing on the damaged tooth.
- Avoid very hot or cold foods if they cause sensitivity.

What to Avoid

Do not put aspirin directly on the tooth or gums—it can burn the tissue. Avoid chewing ice, hard candy, or other hard foods that could cause further damage.

If the Entire Tooth Was Knocked Out

A knocked-out permanent tooth needs immediate dental attention. Keep it moist in milk and get to a dentist right away. Handle it by the crown—the part normally visible in the mouth—and avoid touching the root.

A knocked-out baby tooth should not be placed back into its socket.

Can You Wait If It Does Not Hurt

Even a painless chip or crack should be checked by a dentist. A small chip may only need a routine appointment, while a badly broken tooth needs prompt care. Call your dental office to find out how soon you should be seen.

CareGuard Initiative provides oral health education. This article does not replace an individual dental examination.

Sources

NHS — Chipped, broken or cracked tooth

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/chipped-broken-or-cracked-tooth/>

American Dental Association — Dental emergencies

<https://www.mouthhealthy.org/dental-care/dental-emergencies>

NHS — Dental treatments

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-teeth-and-gums/dental-treatments/>

NHS 111 Wales — Chipped, broken or cracked tooth

<https://111.wales.nhs.uk/chipped%2Cbrokenorcrackedtooth/>

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