

# Knocked Out Teeth

Submitted by:

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With the warmer weather, outdoor sports and other activities bring with it an increased risk for traumatic injuries to the face and mouth. Injuries to young, permanent front teeth can result in a tooth coming out of its socket, termed an avulsion or an avulsed tooth. An avulsion occurs when the entire tooth, including the complete root, comes out of its socket.

The ability to save an avulsed tooth relies partially on how well the tooth is treated while out of the mouth and how quickly it can be put back in (reimplanted). The most critical area of an avulsed tooth is the root. This is due to cells located on the entire root surface, called the periodontal ligament (PDL), that attach the tooth to the bone. It is essential to keep these cells alive by treating them appropriately as well as swiftly. Follow the instructions below to help preserve the PDL and help improve long term prognosis of the reimplanted tooth.

1. Head trauma may require an emergency room visit. Concussions can be a serious situation. Loss of consciousness, disorientation, and vomiting are a few signs of concussion. Cuts inside the mouth can be managed at the dental office.
2. Do not touch the root of the tooth. Pick it up by the crown, or the white portion of the tooth.
3. Remove any debris on the root using Hank's Balanced Salt Solution or milk or water if the salt solution is not available. When washing off the tooth, DO NOT scrub the root. Place the tooth back in the socket using firm pressure for 30-60 seconds. Hank's Balanced Salt Solution is a liquid storage medium that can be found at some pharmacies under the brand names 'Save-A-Tooth' or 'Tooth Saver'. It is possible you may have to ask the pharmacist to order it. It is recommended that parents with active kids purchase this ahead of time, so it's available if a traumatic injury occurs.
4. If reimplanting cannot be accomplished, place the tooth in Hank's Balanced Salt Solution, 'Save-A-Tooth', or 'Tooth Saver' solution. (Cold milk is a lesser alternative.)
5. Call a dentist immediately.

Most avulsions occur to children between the ages of 7-9. Permanent teeth at this age usually are more prominent and the bone is soft enough to allow a tooth to come out without the root breaking. It is recommended to wear a mouthguard while playing sports that could result in trauma to the face or mouth by contact with a ball or another player.

If a tooth is avulsed, make sure it's a permanent tooth before replanting. Primary teeth (baby teeth) should not be replanted due to the potential harm to the permanent tooth inside the gums. Have a great summer and wear a mouthguard!

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**Mark H. Taylor, DDS - Pediatric Dentist**

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