

# Summer and Sport Safety for Your Teeth

## Top 10 Ways To Keep Your Teeth Safe this Summer



By Lata Stefano, D.D.S.,

Some simple techniques to help keep your smile safe this summer. School will be out soon and outdoor activities will attract both children and adults alike. Playground and swimming pool accidents are a common cause of dental emergencies. Baseball, skateboarding, inline skating, bicycling, and running on slick, slip-

pery cement or ceramic pool surfaces often send children headfirst onto the ground causing chipped or loose teeth. Sports are one of the top reasons for teeth injuries.

### Top 10 ways to protect your teeth this summer:

**1. MOUTH GUARD** - Wear an athletic mouth guard when playing sports especially if you wear braces. A custom made mouthguard, made by your dentist, can come in different thicknesses depending on the type of sport you play. The custom fit is the best choice because it fits snugly and protects to maximum capacity.

**2. E.R. KIT** - Pack a dental emergency kit that includes: your dentist's phone number, a container with a lid, ibuprofen, a soft cloth and some gauze. You never know when this could come in handy for yourself, your child, or someone else nearby! Do not hesitate to call 911 for immediate attention.

**3. LOOSE TOOTH** - If a tooth is knocked loose, try to push it gently back into its original position, bite down lightly so the tooth doesn't move and call your dentist or go to the emergency room. Your dentist may splint the tooth to the two healthy teeth next to it.

**4. LOST TOOTH** - If a tooth is completely knocked out or avulsed, pick up the tooth by the crown, not the root. If you touch the root part, this may damage the cells needed to possibly reattach the root to the bone. If you can't get the tooth back into the socket, place the tooth in a container of milk or your saliva and secure with a lid, then call your dentist or call 911. The longer the tooth is out of the mouth, the less likely the tooth will be able to be saved.

**5. BROKEN TOOTH** - If you chip a tooth, retrieve the chipped part if you can, and place it in a plastic bag with a few drops of water. Bring the piece with you to your dentist. The sooner you see your dentist, in some

instances, the more likely she or he will be able to secure the tooth chip back with some dental adhesive. This will give you the best match. If you don't have the piece, a composite enamel-colored material can be bonded to repair the chip. Moderate fractures may require a crown. If the nerve is exposed or damaged, this will require more treatment.

**6. CHIPPED TOOTH** - Minor chips can usually be smoothed or bonded with a composite resin material and still match the natural color of your teeth.

**7. IMMEDIATE ATTENTION** - The sooner you see your dentist after an injury occurs, the better chance you have of saving the tooth.

**8. SOFT TISSUE INJURY** - Injuries to the soft tissue around the teeth, including the cheeks, lips, tongue or puncture wounds should be treated at the emergency room first, and then followed up with your dentist for the teeth injuries, if necessary.

**9. ICE PACK** - Use an ice pack to reduce any swelling. This can help even before the dentist sees you.

**10. EXCESSIVE BLEEDING** - As in all emergency situations, if you feel the situation is urgent, do not hesitate to call 911. Mouth injuries generally incur a lot of bleeding and should be treated immediately to stop the bleeding and treat the injury. Apply gauze over the injury to help relieve some of the bleeding and get immediate attention.

*For questions about this article or for more information about Lata Stefano, DDS, Inc., visit their web site at [www.stefanodental.com](http://www.stefanodental.com) or call 419.626.2205.*

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