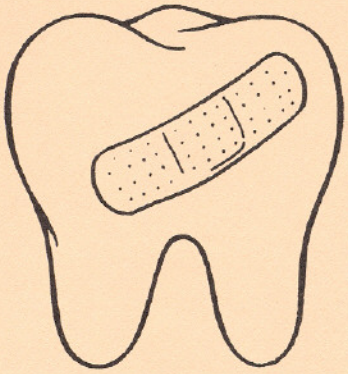

DENTAL EMERGENCIES
First Aid Procedures

What would you do if your child broke a tooth? What should you do? Parents and teachers are sometimes faced with dental emergencies ranging from toothaches to broken teeth to canker sores. The following is a guide of basic dental first aid procedures to follow until a dentist can be consulted.

Toothache - If child has a toothache, rinse the mouth with warm water and floss teeth to remove food particles. If swelling occurs, apply cold packs to outside of face in area of swelling. **DO NOT** apply aspirin or other medications to aching tooth. Take child to dentist.

Bleeding Gums - Bleeding gums are usually the result of poor oral hygiene. By removing plaque daily from the teeth and gums with a soft-bristled toothbrush and dental floss, the gum tissue should return to normal. When red, swollen, or sore gums are present, rinse every two hours with a mixture of equal parts of water and a 3% solution of hydrogen peroxide or with a warm, saltwater solution. If condition does not improve, a visit to the dentist is recommended.

Tooth Eruption Pain - Eruption of the permanent teeth is often accompanied by pain. Locate the eruption site and apply a cold pack to the exterior of the face for temporary relief. A topical anesthetic containing benzocaine or an aspirin substitute may also be beneficial. **DO NOT** apply aspirin to gums. If pain persists, contact a dentist.

Cold Sores, Canker Sores and Fever Blisters Determine if there is a cause for the irritation. Is it a broken dental appliance? Braces? For temporary relief, apply a topical anesthetic containing benzocaine and avoid hot, spicy foods. An aspirin substitute may also be given for relief of pain or fever. **DO NOT** apply aspirin to sores. If sores are severe and not healed within 7-14 days and/or signs of fever and pain persist, contact a dentist.

Knocked Out Tooth - If a tooth is knocked out, find it and place it in cold, whole milk or water. Take the child and tooth to the dentist **immediately! DO NOT CLEAN TOOTH!**

Broken Or Displaced Tooth - Clean injured area with warm water. If injured area begins to swell, apply cold packs to outside of face. Take child to dentist **immediately!**

Tongue or Lip Bite - If bleeding occurs, apply pressure with clean cloth. If injured area swells, apply cold packs. If bleeding does not stop or if bite is severe, take child to hospital emergency room.

Objects Wedged Between Teeth - Carefully remove object from between the teeth with dental floss. If unable to remove, see a dentist. **DO NOT** remove sharp objects - see a dentist immediately.

Possible Fractured Jaw - If jaw is broken or thought to be broken, do not move jaw. Wrap jaw with scarf, handkerchief, tie, towel, etc. to immobilize the jaw and take child to hospital emergency room immediately.

After-Hours Emergencies - Call family dentist or local hospital emergency room for names of dentists on call. Names of dentists who accept emergency patients can also be found in the yellow pages of the phone book.

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You may wish to tape this guide inside a cabinet or cupboard for easy reference.

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