



Let's Talk About Dental Injuries

By Dr. Julia Richman DDS, Dino Kids Dentistry

Summer has ended and the new school year has begun. At Dino Kid's Dentistry, we highly encourage kids to be active and play sports, ride bikes, and just play! Along with a healthy diet, this is one of the best ways to keep bodies and minds in good health. However, sports and outdoor activities can come with the risk of injury. Just as kids can skin knees and bruise shins, they can also have tooth injuries from accidents.



What injuries can occur?

- **Soft tissue injuries, such as a swollen lip, bleeding, or torn gums**
- **Broken teeth or teeth roots**
- **Loosened teeth**
- **Knocked out teeth**

What is the best way to prevent dental injuries?

Wear a mouthguard for any sports or rough outdoor activities! Dr Richman has seen dental injuries occur with soccer, baseball, football, basketball... and of course, roughhousing.

Mouthguards come in three varieties, custom fabricated, commercial "boil and bite", and stock mouthguards. For many school aged children, a boil and bite mouthguard may be all that is necessary. These can be purchased at any sporting goods store. The package will have directions for custom fitting the mouthguard to the child's teeth.

These mouthguards can be very helpful for preventing dental injuries, are inexpensive and easy to fit. Once the child's mouth has outgrown the mouthguard, or if the mouthguard is damaged or does not fit well, a new one should be purchased.

Custom fit mouthguards may be necessary for children and teens who have orthodontic appliances in place or for whom the boil and bite mouthguard doesn't fit well. These mouthguards can be made in a dental office and generally require two visits, the first to take an impression and then to deliver the custom mouthguard.

What should parents do if a mouth injury happens?

First, make sure there is not a more serious injury! **Sports injuries in particular can result in concussions and other head injuries.** Any sign of nausea, vomiting, loss of consciousness, headache, black eyes, or bruising around the ears after an injury means a trip to the



ER is necessary. If your child is not acting “normally” or if you suspect any other injuries such as broken bones, seek immediate medical attention.

If you are confident the only injury is a tooth injury, it's time to call your dentist. Many tooth injuries such as knocked

out teeth should be addressed quickly at a dental office. If a baby tooth is knocked out it is important NOT to replace the baby tooth as this can damage the permanent tooth. Comfort your child, apply a cold compress, and call your pediatric dentist. If a permanent tooth is knocked out, rinse it gently in milk. If possible, replace the tooth in the socket holding the tooth by the crown (top part) only. The cells on the root are very delicate and should not be disturbed. If you cannot replace the tooth, place it in cold milk or saliva to keep the cells of the tooth root alive. Never place it in water as this will kill the cells and make it more likely that the tooth will not survive long term. Call your pediatric dentist immediately as the tooth will need to be stabilized. If any teeth are loose, chipped, or broken, call your dentist right away and treat pain at home with a cold compress and over the counter pain relievers.

Keep playing outside and keep those dino fangs healthy!

This article is for general information only and is not intended as medical or dental advice. Please seek medical and dental care with you or your child's medical or dental provider for specific questions.

For more information and a great chart to print, go to:

- <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/en/dental-care-concerns/dental-emergencies>
- <https://www.uptodate.com/contents/mouth-and-dental-injuries-in-children-beyond-the-basics>
- <https://www.mychildrensteeth.org/globalassets/media/mouth-monster-hub/infographic-activeedit2.pdf>



Pediatric Dentist, Julia Richman
DDS, MSD, MPH, FAAPD
Diplomate, American Board of Pediatric Dentistry
info@dinokidsdentistry.com

Specialty pediatric dentistry in a family-centered environment.

Our experienced team here at Dino Kid's Dentistry will happily assist your child in achieving a healthier smile. We provide a range of common pediatric treatments for children of all ages, including age 1 dental visits at the first birthday.

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253-220-7345
www.dinokidsdentistry.com