

Tooth Emergencies

An unintentional strike or kick to the mouth can easily loosen or dislodge teeth, even if a student is wearing a mouth guard. Once a tooth is knocked out, it has the best chance of survival if replaced within 30 minutes.

Kids Health recommends taking the follow actions to help preserve a knocked-out, permanent tooth until the student can obtain emergency dental assistance:

1. Find the tooth. Handle it by the crown (the top part), never by the root.
2. Gently rinse (don't scrub) the tooth immediately with saline solution or milk. (Use tap water as a last resort. It contains chlorine, which may damage the root.)
3. Keep the tooth from drying out until the student can see the dentist by:
 - a. Inserting the tooth back into its socket in the child's mouth if he or she is old enough to hold it in place,
 - b. Storing the tooth in milk (not water), or
 - c. Having the child's parents place the tooth between their cheek and lower gum.
4. Go to the child's dentist or your local emergency room immediately.

Consider adding a tooth-saver kit to your first aid supplies. Your kit should include latex gloves, saline solution, a container for the tooth, and milk (you'll need to replace milk regularly).

Other steps to prevent tooth loss include:

- Establishing clear rules of acceptable and unacceptable contact. Prohibit head and mouth shots during sparring.
- Requiring students to wear mouth guards. Require students to wear helmets, along with hand and foot padding, during sparring.

If you have a safety or risk management question or a suggestion for a topic, please contact Markel's Risk Management Department at safety1st@markelcorp.com.