What is dental trauma?
Dental trauma is a common kind of injury. By adulthood, almost 1 out of 3 people have had some form of trauma to their teeth and/or jaw.

Who is at most risk for a dental injury?
Your child is at the highest risk for having these injuries when they are:
- Toddlers learning to walk
- Between 8-10 years old and getting their adult teeth

Your child is also at a higher risk if they:
- Have special needs
- Have poor movement coordination
- Play sports (structured competitive or even just in the backyard)
- Have orthodontic issues, like their top front teeth stick out

If your child has had dental trauma in the past, they’re 5 times more likely to re-injure the same tooth, especially if they’re younger than age 9.

Please talk with your child’s dentist if you think that your child may be at increased risk.

What are common dental injuries?

Knocked-out tooth
Try to tell if it’s a baby tooth or an adult tooth. If it is an adult tooth, replace it back into your child’s mouth and see your dentist as soon as possible!
- Hold the tooth by the crown and gently rinse it with water if it’s dirty.
- Try your best not to touch the root of the tooth and don’t scrub the tooth.
- Gently place the tooth back into the hole it fell out of while you head to the dentist.
- If you can’t do this, place the tooth in milk (not water) and bring it to the dentist.

Broken tooth
- Try to rinse your child’s mouth with warm water to clean the area.
- If you have the broken piece of tooth, bring it to your dentist when you take your child in. It might be able to be glued back on.
- Use a cold compress to help with swelling.

Objects in between the teeth
- Try to gently remove the object with dental floss.
- Do not use a sharp instrument.
- Call your child’s dentist with questions or if you can’t get it out.

Broken jaw
- If you think your child broke their jaw, bring them to an Emergency Room right away.
- Use cold compresses to help with swelling.

What do I do if my child has a trauma?
Call your child’s dentist right away for advice.
If you think your child had a head injury or lost consciousness (blacked out), they need to see a doctor. You may need to go to an Emergency Room or make a doctor’s appointment before being seen by the dentist.

How can I protect my child’s teeth during sports?
Encourage them to wear a mouth guard during sports. Ask your child’s dentist about the best type of mouth guard for your child.
- Your child should wear a mouth guard while playing every sport.
- A custom (specially made) mouth guard is best, but is not right for all children.
- An over-the-counter mouth guard can be a good option if it fits well.

Contact us
For more information, visit bostonchildrens.org/dentistry