



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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What You Need to Know in a Dental Emergency

Ankeny, IA (May 18, 2009) -- With summer approaching and kids getting out of school, Delta Dental of Iowa, a leader in oral health, wants you to know what to do if you or your child has a dental emergency.

In most dental emergency situations, it is best to contact your dentist immediately. Your dentist is the expert when it comes to treating oral injuries. "Most dentists will leave time in their daily schedules for emergency care," said Ed Schooley, DDS, dental director for Delta Dental of Iowa. "Should you have a dental emergency at night or over a weekend, most offices will have an emergency line or emergency contact for after-hour appointments."

Going to a medical doctor or emergency room should only be used if you believe it is an urgent clinical situation that cannot wait - uncontrolled bleeding, fever or other systemic effects due to the oral injury.

Below are some different dental emergencies and what you need to do:

- **Knocked Out Tooth**

If a permanent tooth is knocked completely out, time is of the essence. Immediately call your dentist for an emergency appointment. It is critical to get the individual and his or her tooth to the dental office within one-half hour. This makes it possible to re-implant the tooth with a high degree of success. If possible, gently place the tooth back in its socket as a means of transport. Otherwise, transport it in a cup of milk, salt water or saliva. If none of these are available, use a cup of plain water. You may also place the tooth between the cheek and gum.

- **Loosened Tooth**

If a tooth is pushed either inward or outward, try to reposition it using very little

pressure. Do not force the tooth into its socket. Try to get the injured person to a dentist as soon as possible. On the way, the tooth may be stabilized and held in place with a moist tissue or gauze.

- **Broken Tooth**

First rinse the mouth with warm water to keep it clean. Immediate dental care is necessary. The treatment will depend on the severity of the fracture and could range from smoothing out the chip to bonding with a tooth colored resin material, to placing a crown or cap of the tooth. If there has been nerve injury, a root canal may be necessary as well.

- **Bitten Tongue or Lip**

The tongue, lips or cheeks may be bitten, cut or punctured. If there is bleeding, apply firm pressure with gauze or a clean cloth. If bleeding doesn't stop within 15 minutes, contact your dentist immediately. Stitches may be necessary. Otherwise, clean the area with either warm water on gauze or a clean cloth. Apply an ice compress to the bruised or swollen area and contact your dentist for further instructions.

One of the best ways to reduce the chances of damage to your teeth, lips, cheeks and tongue is to wear a mouth guard when participating in sports or recreational activities that may pose a risk.

For more information on oral health go to the Delta Dental website, www.deltadentalia.com.

Delta Dental of Iowa is the largest and most experienced provider of dental benefits in the state. As a not-for-profit, Delta Dental of Iowa invests in oral health projects through the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation that focuses on access to care, prevention, education and research. The Iowa company is a member of the Delta Dental Plans Association, a national organization of not-for-profit Delta Dental plans. The national association is the largest dental benefits carrier in the nation providing coverage to more than 51 million people in nearly 93,000 employer groups.

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