

Healthy You

FAST FACTS FOR YOUR HEALTH

What Is a Dental Emergency?

The COVID-19 global health crisis has affected practically every part of everyday life, including your scheduled dentist visit. In March 2020, the American Dental Association (ADA) recommended that dentists treat only emergency dental cases and reschedule all other appointments until further notice to protect patients and dental office staff.

You may find yourself in a situation requiring urgent dental care, which may need quick action. Here, you'll learn the dental problems that require immediate dental care and what you should do if you think you're experiencing an emergency situation.

Dental Emergencies and Urgent Care Defined

Dental emergencies are teeth and mouth problems that include:

- Heavy bleeding in your mouth
- Extreme swelling in and around your throat, mouth and jaw
- Serious injury to your face (from a sports injury or fall, for example)

These are emergency dental problems because they can prevent you from breathing properly. These conditions and injuries require **immediate** dental or medical care to fix.

Urgent dental problems on the other hand, usually are not life threatening, but they can cause severe pain and have a major impact on your life. That's why your dentist will want to treat you as quickly as possible, so don't delay in calling them.

Below are examples of situations and procedures that warrant urgent dental care:

- Severe tooth pain and gum swelling
- A broken tooth, or tooth that is partially or completely out of its socket
- Cavities or fillings that cause pain
- Stitches removal
- Dental procedures that need to be done before major medical procedures

What to Do If You're Worried

Call your dentist—don't wait if you're experiencing pain or other concerning symptoms—the longer you wait, the worse the problem may become.

Your dentist will ask you to describe your symptoms over the phone to determine if your problem needs immediate emergency care. Be as detailed as possible about what you're experiencing. If you're in too much pain to talk, get a friend or family member to speak to your dentist on your behalf.

What should you do if your dentist office isn't open? Try calling anyway, as some offices offer after-hours emergency assistance. Their answering machine may also provide another number to call. If your dentist isn't able to see you and you need help, you can contact Delta Dental of Iowa's member and provider services team at 800-544-0718 for assistance.

If your dental problem is causing potentially life-threatening problems, such as mouth swelling that is interfering with your ability to breathe, call 911 immediately.

Dental emergencies—like all emergencies—are unplanned and often very frightening. Although you may be in a lot of pain at the time, know that your dentist will help treat the problem as quickly as possible and get you back to living a healthy, pain-free life.

Have a question about emergency coverage in your Delta Dental of Iowa plan?

Our Customer Service team is here to help. Give us a call at the number on the back of you ID card or [contact us here](#).

SOURCES

https://success.ada.org/~media/CPS/Files/Open%20Files/ADA_COVID19_Dental_Emergency_DDS.pdf

<https://www.verywellhealth.com/dental-emergency-go-to-the-hospital-or-see-a-dentist-1059301>

Thirst-quenching Treat: Blackberry-mint Infused Water

As springtime in Iowa approaches, having a few go-to warm weather recipes will keep you cool and refreshed as temperatures climb. With just a few simple ingredients, this blackberry-mint infused water will make getting your eight daily glasses of water effortless and more delicious.

Blackberry-mint infused water

Ingredients:

- A handful of fresh blackberries
- 4 to 5 fresh mint leaves
- Water

Directions:

1. Using a long-handled wooden spoon, gently mash the blackberries in a pitcher, releasing their juices.
2. Rub the mint leaves in your hands to release their oils and place them in the pitcher.
3. Add water and refrigerate for at least two hours, or overnight for fuller flavor.
4. Add more blackberries and mint for stronger flavor.

Fresh mint helps freshen breath, and blackberries have antibacterial properties that can kill bacteria in your mouth. But the real oral health hero in this recipe is water, which boasts several benefits for your teeth and mouth.



Eating and Drinking for Oral Health: Why Water?

Hydration is central to good oral health, so it's hard to overstate the benefits of water to your teeth, mouth and gums.

A simple drink of water after a meal cleans your teeth and breath, and it can wash away food and acid that stick to your teeth. If food and acid remain on your teeth too long, they can activate the bacteria that lead to tooth decay.

Water helps prevent dry mouth, which raises your risk of several oral health conditions, including cavities and gum disease.

The fluoride found in tap water also prevents cavities by reinforcing your enamel, the hard, outer layer of your teeth.

Water boasts a wealth of health benefits, all without containing sugar, calories or acid. No drink hydrates your body as well as water, so raise a glass—simple from the tap or infused with blackberries and mint—to your good oral health.