

Managing Dental Problems at Home

Patient information to help alleviate dental problems until
you can see your dentist

If you need emergency care

- Have you or anyone in your household been self isolating?
- Have you had a cough, fever, breathlessness in the last 14 days?
- Has anyone in your household have/had any symptoms?

If yes to any of the above, please use the online 111 support service or call NHS 111

What is a Dental Emergency?

Urgent Dental Treatment

- Facial swelling extending to eye or neck
- Bleeding following an extraction that does not stop after 20 mins of continuous pressure
- Dental Trauma
- Severe toothache preventing sleep, eating, associated with significant swelling or fever that cannot be managed with painkillers alone

A&E

- Facial swelling affecting vision, breathing, problems swallowing
- Trauma causing loss of consciousness, double vision or vomiting

Non-Urgent Dental Care

- Loose or lost crowns, bridges, veneers or implants
- Broken, rubbing or loose dentures
- Bleeding gums
- Broken, loose or lost fillings
- Chipped teeth with no pain
- Loose orthodontic wires

Painkillers

- Anti-inflammatory medication (Ibuprofen) can help reduce toothache. Combining Ibuprofen and Paracetamol has been shown to be effective.
- No strong evidence currently exists that Ibuprofen can make COVID-19 worse so if you have **non coronavirus symptoms**, carry on taking ibuprofen as normal.
- If you **do have coronavirus symptoms**, take paracetamol , unless your doctor has told you paracetamol is not suitable for you.
- Take painkillers according to packet instructions and do not take medication if it is contraindicated due to current medical problems / existing medication



Toothache

- Extreme sensitivity to hot and cold things means that antibiotics may not work. The following measures may help alleviate symptoms until care can be accessed.
- If there is a hole in the tooth or a tooth has cracked and is now sensitive/sharp, a temporary filling can be packed into the space - temporary fillings can be bought in supermarkets and pharmacies.
- Use sensitive toothpaste (i.e. Sensodyne Rapid Relief or Colgate Sensitive Pro-Relief). Rub toothpaste directly on the affected area and do not rinse afterwards.



Wisdom teeth

Pain is usually due to inflammation of the gum over the erupting wisdom tooth which can be potentially worsened by biting on the swollen gum area.

Management:

- Excellent cleaning, preferably with an electric toothbrush
- Corsodyl mouthwash for 1 week
- Salty water rinses - one teaspoon of salt in a tumbler of warm water. Keep each mouthful in for 30 seconds until tumbler is empty. Repeat 3x daily.
- Soft diet to reduce risk of trauma to the area
- Painkillers like ibuprofen or paracetamol - follow pack instructions

IF YOU HAVE DIFFICULTY OPENING YOUR MOUTH BY MORE THAN TWO FINGERS, HAVE A SWOLLEN FACE OR CHEEK OR DIFFICULTY SWALLOWING, PLEASE RING THE PRACTICE AS YOU MAY NEED ANTIBIOTICS TO STOP THE SPREAD OF THE INFECTION.

Ulcer Management

- Salty water rinses - one teaspoon of salt in a tumbler of warm water. Keep each mouthful in for 30 seconds until tumbler is empty. Repeat 3x daily.
- Excellent oral hygiene even if it feels sore
- Difflam (Benzydamine) spray or mouthwash as needed
- Painkillers according to pack instructions
- Soft diet to reduce trauma to area
- Rubbing Dentures - use fixative to help reduce movement - if still painful, remove dentures when possible to reduce trauma
- Corsodyl mouthwash for 1 week

Ulcerations usually heal within 10 days. Non healing ulcers or oral lesions have to be assessed by a dentist or doctor if still present after 2 weeks

Pain or bleeding after extraction

- If a socket is pink/oozing after extraction of a tooth, this is normal.
- If socket is bleeding freely, bite firmly for 20 min on the bite pack provided or clean gauze. If still bleeding, repeat for a further 20 min. If bleeding is still persistent, call the dental practice and speak to your dentist.
- If you smoke or rinse too soon after an extraction, you risk a dry socket that can be very painful and regular painkillers are unlikely to help. Call the surgery for an emergency appointment. Antibiotics will not help.
- Bleeding from the gums is not a dental emergency and can be managed by performing excellent oral hygiene including daily flossing +/- TePe brushes to clean in-between your teeth

Lost Crown

- 1) Clean and check the crown - if the crown is mostly hollow, you can attempt to re-cement it at home if you feel confident to do so.
- 2) Remove any debris from the crown and clean your tooth thoroughly
- 3) Check the crown fits without cement first. Check that the bite feels correct - if the tooth feels too tall, the fit is not correct - double check for debris. **NEVER FORCE A CROWN ONTO THE TOOTH.**
- 4) If you cannot re-cement the crown yourself, clean your tooth well and wait to see your dentist
- 5) **DO NOT USE SUPERGLUE** or a **FIXADENT** to cement your crowns!
- 6) Use cements from pharmacies i.e. Recapit
- 7) Once you have practiced placing the crown over your tooth, dry the tooth and crown, mix the cement as per pack instructions and fill the crown. Place the crown directly onto the tooth and biting firmly to press it into place.
- 8) Remove any excess cement with a toothpick and floss between your teeth to make sure they do not stick together

