

Dental Emergency Quick-Action Guide

For adults 60+: what to do, who to call, and which warning signs should not wait

CALL 911 OR GO TO AN EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

Seek emergency medical care for **difficulty breathing, difficulty swallowing with mouth or facial swelling, rapidly spreading face or neck swelling, uncontrolled heavy bleeding**, major facial/jaw trauma, or loss of consciousness/other serious symptoms after trauma.

What should I do?

Problem	What to do now	Who to call
Severe toothache	Rinse gently with warm water. If food is trapped, clean between teeth carefully. Avoid chewing on that side. Do not place aspirin directly on the tooth or gum.	Dentist promptly Same day if severe, persistent, or accompanied by swelling/fever.
Swelling / abscess	Do not squeeze or puncture it. Contact a dentist. If swelling affects breathing/swallowing or is spreading quickly, treat it as a medical emergency.	Dentist urgently 911/ER for emergency warning signs.
Knocked-out permanent tooth	Hold by the crown, not the root. Gently rinse if dirty - do not scrub. Reinsert if possible without forcing it; otherwise keep it moist in milk or a tooth-preservation solution.	Dentist immediately
Cracked / broken tooth	Rinse with warm water. Use a cold compress outside the face if swollen. Save pieces. Avoid chewing on the tooth.	Dentist promptly
Lost filling / crown	Save the crown if you have it. Keep the area clean and avoid chewing there. Do not use household glue for a permanent repair.	Dentist soon More urgent if severe pain or damage is present.
Loose adult tooth	Do not keep wiggling it. Chew on the other side. A loose adult tooth needs evaluation, especially after trauma or with pain, pus, or swelling.	Dentist promptly
Broken denture / partial	Remove it if it is cutting the mouth. Save all pieces. Do not use household glue or bend metal clasps yourself.	Dentist / denture repair Promptly if you cannot eat safely.
Loose implant / implant crown	Avoid wiggling it or chewing hard foods on it. The loose part may be the crown, screw, attachment, or implant itself.	Dentist promptly
Mouth bleeding	Use firm pressure with clean gauze if appropriate. Follow post-treatment instructions. Do not stop prescription blood thinners on your own.	Dentist / medical help 911/ER if heavy or uncontrolled.

Medication reminder: Tell the dentist about anticoagulants, antiplatelet medicines, and other prescriptions. Do not stop a prescribed blood thinner on your own.

My Dental Emergency Information

Fill this out now and keep it somewhere easy to find.

My dentist	
Daytime phone	
After-hours instructions / phone	
Backup or emergency dental clinic	
Clinic phone	
Pharmacy	
Pharmacy phone	
Dental insurance / plan	
Member ID (optional)	
Emergency contact	
Emergency contact phone	

Important health information to tell the dental team

Current medications	
Blood thinners / antiplatelet medicines	
Medication or latex allergies	
Important health conditions	

Simple dental emergency kit

■ Sterile gauze	■ Dental floss	■ Small clean container
■ Cold pack	■ Flashlight	■ Medication list
■ Dentist phone number	■ Insurance card	■ Tooth-preservation product (optional)

Notes

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Keep this guide near your medication list, on the refrigerator, or with other emergency information.

Important: This guide is for general information and does not replace professional dental or medical advice. When in doubt, contact a dentist. For severe swelling affecting breathing or swallowing, uncontrolled bleeding, or major facial trauma, seek emergency medical care.