



June 12, 2007

## media release

### **Let's hope "Look Ma, No Teef" is a thing of the past**

Summer is here, and that means everything from spring cleaning, baseball and golf to yard work, building projects and bicycling. Unfortunately spring can also bring its share of falls and other accidents – many of them involving injury to the teeth and mouth.

For children, the most common dental accidents are from falling off a bicycle, giving substance to the only cartoon where a child on a bicycle says, "Look Ma, no hands. Look Ma, no feet, Look Ma, no teef." Adults tend to hurt themselves in falls while doing home repairs or clean up, in sports and even in assaults.

The Alberta Dental Association + College advises you to be prepared for dental emergencies by knowing what to do if you, your child, a friend or work mate has a close encounter with a hard surface.

#### **Chipped or broken tooth**

If the accident results in a chipped or broken tooth, the tooth can almost always be saved. Call your dentist and explain what happened so they will be sure to see you right away. If it's a small break, the dentist may use a white filling to fix the tooth. If the break is serious, a root canal or crown (cap) may be needed.

#### **Knocked out tooth**

If a permanent (adult) tooth is knocked out, your dentist may be able to put it back. However, you must act quickly. If the tooth is put back in place within 10 minutes, it has a fair chance of taking root again. After two hours, the chances are poor.

If the tooth looks clean, put it back in the socket. If this is not possible or if there's a chance the tooth might be swallowed, put it in a container of cold milk. Go to your dentist (or the nearest dentist) right away. If you get help within ten minutes, there is a fair chance the tooth will take root again.

#### **Badly bitten lip or tongue**

If there is bleeding, press down on the part of the mouth that is bleeding. Use a clean cloth to do this. If the lip is swollen, use an ice pack to keep the swelling down. If the bleeding does not stop, go to a hospital emergency ward.

-more-

**Lost filling**

Put a piece of softened sugarless chewing gum in the spot where the filling was lost. This will provide temporary relief and protect the area for a short period of time. Then see a dentist as soon as possible.

**Protect your teeth during sports**

If you or your child are into contact sports, you may want to consider using a mouth guard to minimize the risk of injury to teeth, mouth or jaw. The mouth guard acts as a cushion that redistributes the force of the blow so the impact is absorbed more evenly. A mouth guard also provides a barrier between your teeth and the soft tissue around your mouth. Many studies have shown that mouth guards help prevent chipped or broken teeth and protect against cuts to lips, gums and other soft tissues in the mouth.

However, even common sense and protective devices can't always prevent an accident. Being prepared for a dental emergency will help reduce some of the potential ill effects, and keep your smile and your oral health intact.

For further information on oral health and dental emergencies, talk to your dentist or visit the Alberta Dental Association + College website [www.abda.ab.ca](http://www.abda.ab.ca).

**Media contact:**

Kimberly Carriere  
Communications, Marketing + Member Services  
Alberta Dental Association + College  
Phone: (780) 432-1012 or toll free 1-800-843-3848