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What To Do If a Child's Tooth Falls Out

by Sarah Carpenter

Most babies get their first teeth — known as primary teeth — between 4- and 7-months-old. What's cuter than those first teeth pushing through? That adorable little grin can light up a room. By age 3, your child will usually have all of their baby teeth, but by age 6, you might be thinking of clever ways to introduce the Tooth Fairy to storytime. It's at this age that most children lose their first baby tooth.

Every child responds differently to losing their first tooth. Your child may feel excited about the Tooth Fairy's first visit or nervous about the pain. You might even wonder what *you're* supposed to do. You're not alone. Let's see how keeping their gums clean and managing their pain can help this be a positive process for your little ones.

Wiggle It (Just a Little Bit)

It's okay to encourage your child to wiggle their loose teeth, but it's important not to pull them out before they're ready. If the tooth is forced out, it may create a broken root causing infection. We definitely don't want that. If you'd like to give it a wiggle, [grasp the tooth firmly](#) using a piece of tissue or gauze and quickly twist it to remove it.

Falling Out

Your child's tooth was ready to come out and it did. [It is perfectly normal for your child's gums](#) to bleed after losing their tooth. So, the first thing you can do is clean the area. Use a soft or sterile gauze to wipe their gums gently. You can also have your child rinse their mouth with warm saltwater. This may be a little unpleasant for them, but it will help clean out the empty socket.

If It Hurts

It's completely normal if your child experiences some pain or discomfort after their baby tooth has fallen out. An over-the-counter topical anesthetic is a fast and easy way to relieve and manage any pain they're feeling. Remember to clean the area and wait for the bleeding to stop before applying any anesthetic ointment.

If It Still Hurts

If your child continues to complain of pain after losing their tooth, check for a swollen socket where their baby tooth used to be. This can be caused by wiggling a loose tooth before it's ready to fall out. You can give them a dose of children's ibuprofen to help decrease inflammation, but be sure to contact your dentist if the swelling persists.

What Should You Do If Your Child Loses a Permanent Tooth?

If your child loses a permanent tooth, notify a dentist as soon as possible so that it can be re-implanted. Immediately after the tooth comes out, it's important that whoever is nearby — a parent or coach, for instance — should gently, but quickly clean the tooth (rinse with water) and push it back into the socket. Teeth are more likely salvageable if reinserted within one hour of falling out. If a tooth cannot be re-implanted immediately, it is imperative that you save it properly. Use cold milk or a product called Hank's Balanced Salt Solution for best results. Saliva can also work. Never store the tooth dry, in water, contact lens solution or yogurt.

Encourage Good Oral Care

Your child's excitement about losing their baby teeth can be a great way to get them excited about good oral care, in general. Inadequate care for baby teeth can affect the development of their adult/permanent teeth. So, it's imperative to teach your child about the importance of taking care of their teeth and practicing good dental care daily. A healthy routine will help protect their teeth and reduce the risk of plaque buildup and early gingivitis.

Maintaining a Healthy Smile

Make it fun for your little one to brush their teeth. They should gently brush their teeth twice a day with a soft-bristled toothbrush. Even young children can floss their teeth, and it's good to get them in the habit early. Remind them to floss or clean between their teeth once a day. We all know how much kids love candy and sweets. Don't allow them to eat or drink an excess of sugar, and encourage their interest in trying healthier alternatives.

Growing Up

Losing the first baby tooth is a big moment for both child and parent. Your child might feel excited or even scared about losing their teeth. [Developing a regular schedule and a healthy relationship](#) with your child's dentist can help to eliminate any fears your child may have. It can also help you provide positive reinforcement and encouragement, too.

West Coast Dental Can Help

We might be grown ups now, but we still believe in the Tooth Fairy. Find the right practitioner for you and your child at West Coast Dental. Our specialists and general dentists are ready to serve you and your dental needs. [Schedule an appointment with us today.](#)

Sarah Carpenter is a freelance writer whose portfolio spans the industries of healthcare, higher education and entertainment. Find out more at [her website](#).

References

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KidsHealth — [Keeping Your Child's Teeth Healthy](#)