



## NEWS RELEASE

### For Immediate Release

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#### **Back to School: How to Handle Tooth Trauma** *Accidents happen, but quick actions can save smiles*

**NAPERVILLE, Ill. (August 14, 2013)** – As children head back to school, it is important to remember that dental emergencies can happen any time, any place. According to the 2013 Children’s Oral Health Survey,<sup>1</sup> one in 10 children ages 10 or 11 have had a tooth emergency such as a knocked-out tooth, chipped tooth or a loosened permanent tooth at home or school.

“A knocked-out permanent tooth is a true dental emergency, and there’s a good chance it can be saved if you know what to do and act quickly,” said Dr. Katina Spadoni, DDS, dental director for Delta Dental of Illinois.

The primary concern should be getting the child to a dentist. Time is crucial if you want the dentist to be able to reinsert and salvage the natural tooth. Ideally, a child needs to be seen within 30 minutes of the accident.<sup>2</sup>

Whether a tooth is knocked out at school or home, here are several steps to help ensure it is saved – or at least in optimal condition – by the time the child can see the dentist.

- First, check to make sure the child doesn’t have a serious head, neck or other orofacial injury (i.e., a concussion, broken jaw, etc.).
- Don’t worry about replacing a displaced baby tooth. Trying to reinsert it could damage the permanent pearly white coming in behind it.
- To avoid infection, the tooth should be held by the crown, not the root. The crown is the part of the tooth visible to the naked eye. You want to leave the root intact, and touching it with bare hands could pass bacteria.<sup>2</sup>
- Rinse any debris off of the tooth under room temperature water. Don’t scrub the root. Once the tooth is free of loose dirt and debris, try to reinsert it, asking the child to hold it in place using a piece of gauze if necessary.<sup>3</sup>
- If the tooth cannot be successfully reinserted, it needs to stay moist until the child can visit a dentist. Store the tooth in a clean container and cover it with milk or room temperature water to prevent it from drying out.<sup>4</sup> These liquids aren’t ideal but are often the only ones readily available. If you are a school nurse or a coach or your child frequently plays contact sports, purchase a save-a-tooth kit (available at most drugstores). These contain a solution that’s better at preserving live cells on the tooth root until the dentist can put the tooth back into the socket.

“If there is a head, jaw or neck injury, take the child to the emergency room immediately,” Dr. Spadoni said. “In most cases, tooth injuries are not life threatening. They can have long-lasting effects on the child’s appearance and self-confidence though, so it is important to act quickly in the event of a dental emergency.”

For additional information about protecting children’s teeth, visit [mouthmattersil.com](http://mouthmattersil.com).

### **About Delta Dental of Illinois**

*Delta Dental of Illinois (DDIL) is a not-for-profit dental service corporation that provides dental benefit programs to individuals and more than 5,000 employee groups throughout Illinois. DDIL covers 2 million individuals, employees and family members in these groups nationwide. DDIL is based in Naperville, Illinois and offers single-site administration and client services.*

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<sup>1</sup>Morpace Inc. conducted the 2013 Delta Dental Children’s Oral Health Survey. Interviews were conducted nationally via the Internet with 926 primary caregivers of children from birth to age 11. For results based on the total sample of national adults, the margin error is ±3.2 percentage points at a 95 percent confidence level.

<sup>2</sup>“Saving a Knocked-Out Tooth.” American Association of Endodontists.

<http://www.aae.org/patients/patientinfo/references/avulsed.htm>. Accessed 2013.

<sup>3</sup>“Medical Encyclopedia: Broken or Knocked Out Tooth.” U.S. National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health, February 22, 2010. [www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000058.htm](http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/000058.htm). Accessed 2013.

<sup>4</sup>“Dental Emergencies.” American Dental Association. <http://www.ada.org/370.aspx> Accessed 2013.