

Other leaflets in the series:

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 Trigeminal Neuralgia Arthritis Diabetes Pain Phantom Limb Pain Shingles &
 PHN Cancer Pain
 Pain after Stroke Sciatica Opioids for chronic pain
 Chronic pain & sex Drugs for nerve pain
 Complex Regional Pain Syndrome

The Pain Relief Foundation is a registered charity. If you found this leaflet useful please consider donating to the Foundation. Every donation helps to fund research into the treatment of chronic pain conditions.

This leaflet was written by the staff of the Pain Relief Foundation and endorsed by The Walton Centre Pain Team, Walton Center for Neurology & Neurosurgery, Lower Lane, Liverpool, L9 7LJ, UK www.thewaltoncentre.nhs.uk



PAIN RELIEF FOUNDATION
www.painrelieffoundation.org.uk

DENTAL PAIN

See a dentist if you have toothache that lasts more than 2 days. They can treat the cause of the pain and stop any problems getting worse. There are also things you can do to ease toothache while you wait for an appointment.

See a dentist if you have toothache:

- that lasts more than 2 days
- that does not go away when you take painkillers
- with a high temperature, pain when you bite, red gums, or a bad taste in your mouth
- and your cheek or jaw is swollen

Do not go to your GP as they will not be able to give you dental treatment.

Go to A&E if you have toothache and:

- The area around your eye or your neck is swollen
- Swelling in your mouth or neck is making it difficult for you to breathe, swallow or speak
- Difficulty breathing or swallowing
- You have the inability to open your mouth

TO SEE A DENTIST IN AN EMERGENCY OR OUT OF HOURS:

- CALL YOUR DENTIST – IF THEY'RE CLOSED, THEIR ANSWERPHONE MAY TELL YOU WHAT TO DO

IF YOU DO NOT HAVE A DENTIST OR CANNOT GET AN EMERGENCY APPOINTMENT:

- CALL 111 OR VISIT [111 ONLINE](#) – THEY CAN ADVISE YOU WHAT TO DO
- [FIND A DENTIST NEAR YOU](#) – ASK IF YOU CAN HAVE AN EMERGENCY APPOINTMENT

YOU MAY HAVE TO PAY FOR YOUR APPOINTMENT.**HOW TO EASE TOOTHACHE WHILE WAITING FOR AN APPOINTMENT**

- TAKE PAINKILLERS, LIKE [IBUPROFEN](#) OR [PARACETAMOL](#) (CHILDREN UNDER 16 SHOULD NOT TAKE ASPIRIN) – A PHARMACIST CAN ADVISE YOU
- USE A PAIN-RELIEVING GEL FOR YOUR MOUTH – THIS CAN BE BOUGHT FROM PHARMACIES OR SUPERMARKETS
- TRY RINSING YOUR MOUTH WITH SALT WATER -DISSOLVE HALF A TEASPOON OF SALT IN A GLASS OF WARM WATER TO RINSE YOUR MOUTH; THIS HELPS WITH GUM INFLAMMATION
- EAT SOFT FOODS, LIKE YOGHURT OR SCRAMBLED EGGS, AND TRY TO AVOID CHEWING WITH THE SORE TOOTH
- USE A SOFT TOOTHBRUSH AND AVOID FLOSSING AROUND THE SORE TOOTH
- COLD COMPRESS: USE AN ICE PACK WRAPPED IN A TEA TOWEL ON THE OUTSIDE OF YOUR CHEEK TO REDUCE SWELLING
- TRY AND EAT ON THE OTHER SIDE OF YOUR MOUTH
- KEEP YOUR HEAD ELEVATED AT NIGHT WITH AN EXTRA PILLOW. THIS CAN RELIEVE PRESSURE WITHIN A TOOTH, REDUCING PAIN.

DON'T

- **DO NOT EAT FOODS THAT ARE SWEET, VERY HOT OR VERY COLD**
- **DO NOT SMOKE – IT CAN MAKE SOME DENTAL PROBLEMS WORSE**
- **DO NOT APPLY HEAT TO A FACIAL SWELLING, AS THIS CAN MAKE IT WORSE.**

HOW TO PREVENT TOOTHACHE

THE BEST WAY TO PREVENT TOOTHACHE IS TO KEEP YOUR TEETH AND GUMS AS HEALTHY AS POSSIBLE.

TO DO THIS:

- HAVE [REGULAR DENTAL CHECK-UPS](#)
- CUT DOWN ON SUGARY FOODS AND DRINKS – ONLY HAVE THEM AS AN OCCASIONAL TREAT AT MEALTIMES
- BRUSH YOUR TEETH TWICE A DAY FOR ABOUT 2 MINUTES WITH A FLUORIDE TOOTHPASTE
- CLEAN BETWEEN YOUR TEETH USING FLOSS OR AN INTERDENTAL BRUSH EVERY DAY TO REMOVE FOOD, DEBRIS AND PLAQUE

CAUSES OF TOOTHACHE

- TOOTH DECAY
- A DENTAL ABSCESS
- A CRACKED OR DAMAGED TOOTH
- A LOOSE OR BROKEN FILLING
- AN INFECTION – THIS OFTEN HAPPENS WHEN A TOOTH (SUCH AS A WISDOM TOOTH) HAS BROKEN THE SKIN, BUT DOES NOT HAVE ENOUGH ROOM TO FULLY COME THROUGH
- GUM DISEASE
- GRINDING YOUR TEETH