

PRIMARY TOOTH TRAUMA

Trauma to baby (primary) teeth is handled differently than permanent teeth. Treatment depends on several factors such as age and severity of injury.

Things to monitor:

1. Tooth turns a darker shade - This can mean that some nerve and blood vessel necrosis (death) is occurring. The tooth should be x-rayed to determine if any pathology is present at the time the tooth darkens. Sometimes a darkened tooth does not mean the death of a tooth but rather a bruise. Both conditions require monitoring. Call our office to get an x-ray if darkening occurs.

Treatment Philosophies: 2 common theories on treatment of a dark tooth.

1. "Fix it before it breaks" - The darkening may mean necrosis and a primary tooth root canal should be accomplished as soon as possible. This treatment philosophy is acceptable but in our opinion too aggressive in most cases.

2. "Don't kick a sleeping dog" theory or "If it ain't broke, don't fix it" - Monitoring the tooth closely may prevent unnecessary treatment. If a problem occurs later treatment can be done then.

2. Abscess formation - If a blister, red swelling, or pimple like formation occurs above the tooth, or if your child is experiencing pain, the tooth has probably abscessed. We'll need to start treatment to clear it up immediately. Call us as soon as it is discovered. Antibiotic coverage is usually necessary.

Treatment Options:

Extract the abscessed tooth - Factors like age, esthetics, space maintenance, etc. are all necessary to consider on an individual basis.

Pulpectomy - A primary tooth root canal is cleaned out and filled with an inert material. This is usually a pain free, easily tolerated procedure for children. Adult root canals are very different than child root canals. Child root canal therapy is rapid and not technique sensitive.

To summarize:

When a tooth is traumatized to any extent, it can die and abscess. The tooth should be monitored by both our office and the parent. Call our office if or when the tooth turns dark, if you see an abscess, blister or pimple forming on the gums (up near the root tip), or if your child experiences consistent pain or discomfort that TYLENOL or ADVIL doesn't cover.

If an abscess is allowed to exist without treatment, the permanent tooth may be damaged. Early treatment is a must. In children, not all abscess formations hurt, so a regular visual examination by the parent is essential. The traumatized primary tooth can abscess anytime from days after the trauma, to right before the tooth naturally falls out. Careful, consistent monitoring is essential.

PATIENT NAME

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