



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

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**A Dental Emergency Is Not What You Ever Want on Vacation**

While many of us are now planning time away at the beach, camping, or on another summer venture, we often don't think about our oral health. As the Go-Gos sang in the early 1980s, "Vacation, all I ever wanted!" However, the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) notes that what you *don't* want on your summer vacation is a dental crisis.

Many dental emergencies often need immediate attention, which can become difficult when you are traveling and away from your familiar surroundings. Being prepared is the best way to handle any dental situation that may arise. If you are traveling within the United States, perform some research prior to your trip to identify dentists in the area in case of an emergency. Also, it's important not to start any major dental procedures before a trip, and make sure your teeth are generally healthy.

"Before leaving for vacation, it is a good idea to be examined by your dentist to ensure there are no impending problems that may become emergencies while you are away," says David Samuels, DMD, an Andover periodontist and president of the MDS. "Also, any non-emergency dental treatment that may require follow-up care should not be started just before you leave."

The most common ailment that can occur is often a broken tooth or filling, which can happen frequently when chewing on ice or other crunchy foods. To remedy this situation, apply ice or cold compresses to the side of your face if there is swelling. Most pharmacies also sell a temporary material you can use to 'patch' the tooth until you can get to a dentist.

A knocked out tooth is also common, especially while playing sports or engaging in other physical activities. If a tooth is knocked out, hold it by the crown making sure to rinse the root of the tooth in water if it is dirty. If possible, gently replant the tooth back into the socket or place it in the space between your teeth and gums. If those options are not possible,

keep the tooth moist by putting it in a cup of milk, water, or wrapping the tooth in saline-soaked gauze. Getting to a local dentist as quickly as possible is important, as reimplantation within 30 minutes has the best rate of success. Most importantly, “Use proper protection such as a mouthguard when engaging in activities which may result in injury to your teeth,” adds Dr. Samuels.

If you or your child suffers from a bitten tongue or lip while away on vacation, keep calm and clean the area gently with a cloth. Apply cold compresses to keep the swelling down. If bleeding is severe or doesn’t stop within a short amount of time, go to a local hospital emergency department.

If you are traveling outside of the country, be aware that dental treatment may not be the same abroad as it is at home. The American Dental Association notes that dentists in the U.S. graduate from accredited dental schools, and some go on to additional years of study for oral health specialties, such as endodontics or oral surgery. However, when overseas, it’s difficult to determine if a dentist you visit has the same level of education or training. If you are abroad, the International Association for Medical Assistance to Travelers (IAMAT) maintains a network of medical professionals and clinics around the world. For more information, visit their Web site at [www.iamat.org](http://www.iamat.org).

By following these guidelines and doing some pre-vacation oral health planning, you can avoid dental injuries and enjoy your summer vacation with a smile.

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The Massachusetts Dental Society is a 5,000-member professional association and statewide constituent of the American Dental Association.