

**MEDIA RELEASE**

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**ODA URGES ONTARIANS TO PLAN FOR A SAFE FAMILY DAY**

*The Ontario Dental Association offers tips on how to handle a winter-related dental emergency*

Toronto, ON – Family Day is a chance for parents and kids to enjoy the last few weeks of snowfall, which means tobogganing, skating and snowball fights. But any winter activity comes with a risk of injury to the teeth and mouth. The Ontario Dental Association (ODA) wants to remind parents to take extra precautions during this holiday and learn what to do in case of a dental injury.

“Don’t assume that non-contact sports or activities can’t cause mouth injuries -- an icy snowball can cause a lot of damage to teeth,” says Dr. Lynn Tomkins, ODA President. “If your child is involved in sports or other physical activities, be prepared to deal with injuries from any outdoor winter activity.”

The ODA has important tips on dental or mouth injuries that every parent or caregiver should know:

- ✓ Get to the dentist as quickly as possible after an injury to the teeth. Time is critical to the chances of saving your tooth.
- ✓ If a knocked-out tooth cannot be put back in the socket immediately, store it in cold milk or in a sterile saline solution and get to a dentist as soon as possible. Make sure it is a permanent tooth – primary, or “baby”, teeth should never be replanted.
- ✓ For a chipped or broken tooth, rinse the mouth with warm water to clean the area. Use cold compresses on the area to keep any swelling down. Call your dentist immediately.
- ✓ For an injury to the jaw, apply cold compresses to control swelling. Go to your dentist or a hospital emergency department immediately.
- ✓ Talk to your dentist about commercially available tooth injury kits and keep one in your first-aid kit.
- ✓ For a split lip, press down on the part that is bleeding with a clean cloth. If the lip is swollen, use an ice pack to keep the swelling down. If the bleeding does not stop, go to a hospital emergency department at a hospital right away.
- ✓ Ask your dentist about after-hours emergency care. They will provide you with an alternate phone number or the location of an emergency dental clinic in your area. Post this information on your refrigerator or by your phone.
- ✓ Where appropriate, for organized sports like hockey, ask your dentist about getting a mouthguard to protect your child’s head, jaw and teeth.

“The sooner a mouth injury is treated by a dentist, the better the long-term prognosis,” says Dr. Tomkins. “So have a good emergency plan, be prepared to act quickly and ask your dentist about emergency contacts.”

For more information about dental emergencies, visit the ODA’s website at [www.youroralhealth.ca](http://www.youroralhealth.ca).

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