

## Playgrounds: Site of tooth traumas?

### **Parents may not realize how hidden dangers of certain summer activities can also affect teeth**

School's out and summer is here, attracting swarms of children to flock to outdoor activities. Yet, parents may not realize how hidden dangers of certain summer activities can also affect teeth, reports the Academy of General Dentistry, an organization of general dentists dedicated to continuing dental education.

"In the summer, accidents that cause tooth injuries occur mostly from falling off playground swings, diving into shallow pools, baseball, skateboarding, in-line skating and bicycling," says Lawrence Bailey, DDS, FAGD, spokesperson for the Academy of General Dentistry.

Most people do not know that:

- For ages 0-4, playground injuries to the brain and face account for nearly 60 percent of all injuries.
- Every two-and-a-half minutes, a child is injured on a playground in the United States.
- Approximately 10 percent of children who participate in sports receive some type of injury to the face.
- Thirty-six percent of injuries to children are sports related.
- Five million teeth are knocked out each year.

These accidents mostly cause cracked and fractured teeth and lip lacerations, according to a recent study in *General Dentistry*, the peer-reviewed journal of the Academy. In addition, high impact collisions can cause broken jaws, and tooth trauma symptoms include sensitivity to hot and cold temperatures.

If you or your child experiences a tooth injury this summer, several actions would be advisable.

1. If a tooth has come out completely (including the root), attempt to have the child spit into a cup or plastic baggie. Covering the tooth in the person's saliva may keep the tooth alive and it may be able to be replaced into the hole. If it is not possible to collect the patient's saliva, place the tooth in milk and take the patient and the tooth to a dentist immediately.
2. If a tooth is fractured off, with root and some tooth still visible, the tooth will be built up with restorative material, do not be concerned about finding the missing part of the tooth.
3. First aid gauze or bandages rolled into a ½ inch square can control bleeding at the site of a broken tooth or lacerated lip.
4. Apply ice to the area of injury to reduce swelling.
5. Visit the dentist as quickly as possible. CCHD Dental Clinic # 239-252-5314