

DENTAL CLINIC

FRACTURED AND BROKEN TEETH



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You're enjoying a piece of hard candy or chewing on an unpopped popcorn when you realise that there is something hard in your mouth that doesn't melt or dissolve. You get a sick feeling as you realise what it is - a piece of broken tooth. It is not uncommon for people to get a chipped tooth. It can happen due to chewing on hard things, a fall or even to a sports injury.

What to do if you find a chipped tooth

If your tooth is broken, chipped or fractured, see your dentist as soon as possible. Otherwise, your tooth could be damaged further or become infected, possibly causing you to end up losing the tooth.

In the meantime, try the following self-care measures:

- If the tooth is painful, take an over-the-counter pain reliever.
- If the break has caused a sharp or jagged edge, cover it with a piece of wax paraffin or chewing gum to keep it from cutting your tongue or the inside of your lip or cheek.
- Eat soft foods and avoid chewing with the broken tooth.

Treatment options for broken or chipped tooth

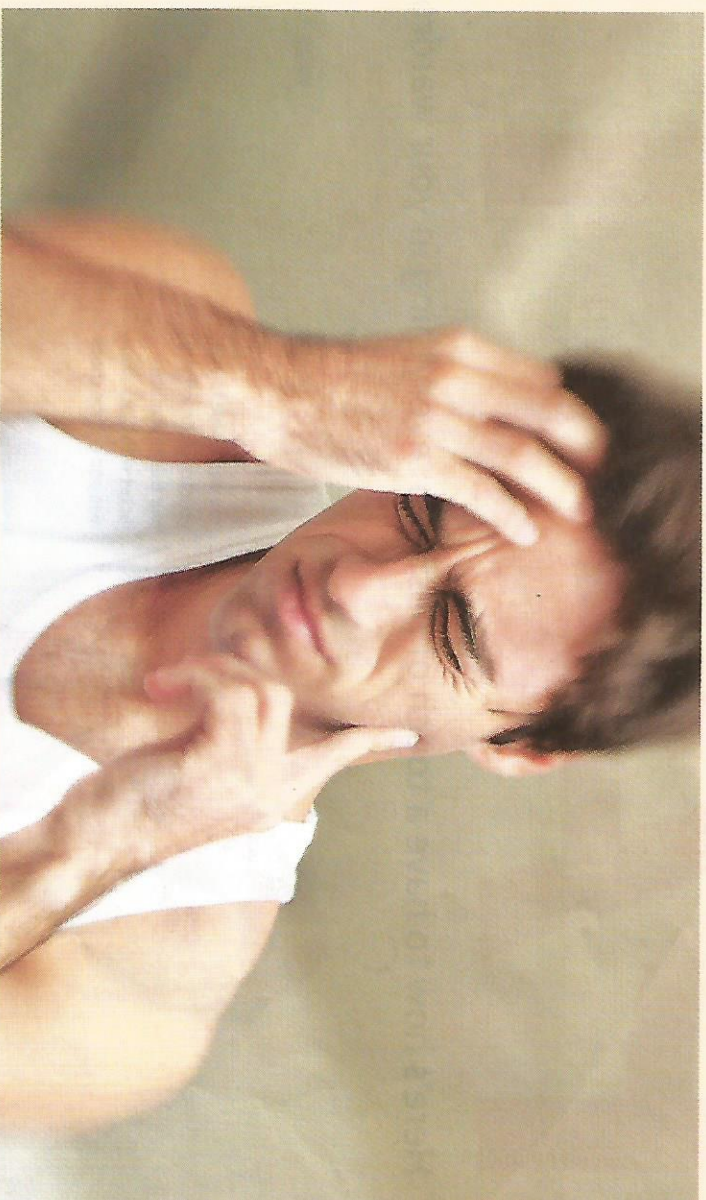
Treatment for a broken or chipped tooth will depend on how severely it is damaged. Here are some ways your dentist may repair your broken or chipped tooth.

Dental filling or bonding

If only a small piece of enamel broke off, your dentist will probably smooth the uneven edge and replace the missing bit with a tooth-coloured filling.

Dental cap or crown

If a large piece of tooth breaks off or the tooth has a lot of decay, the dentist may grind or file away part of the remaining tooth and



cover it with a crown (tooth-shaped cap) made to protect the tooth and improve its appearance.

Dental veneers

If a front tooth is broken or chipped, a dental veneer can make it look normal and healthy again. A dental veneer is a thin shell of tooth coloured porcelain or resin composite material that covers the whole front of the tooth (much like a false nail covers a fingernail) to replace the broken part of the tooth.

Root canal

If a chipped tooth hurts, changes colour or is sensitive to heat, then the pulp is probably damaged or diseased. Pulp tissue can die and if it is not removed, the tooth can become infected and need to be

extracted. Root canal therapy involves removing the dead pulp, cleaning the root canal, and then sealing it.

Preventing breakage and chipping

You should be careful while chewing on any hard thing or popcorn so that you don't bite too hard and chip a tooth. Children should take care while running so as to not fall and damage their teeth. If you play contact sports such as rugby, it is worth investing in a mouthguard to protect your teeth from any knocks. You can ask your dentist to make a custom-fit mouthguard for you.

For more information on this topic, email your queries to Dr Richa at health@apexmedia.co.om