

Sample Newspaper Articles

The sample articles **may be published as a public service to the community by the ADA's state or local dental societies, chapters of the Alliance to the American Dental Association, departments of health or the armed forces' dental clinics. All others entities seeking permission to publish the articles must do so in writing via email to National Children's Dental Health Month ncdhm@ada.org.** You may wish to add quotes from your spokesperson and expand on the contents in the samples.

Send a brief letter or email to community affairs editors informing them that February is National Children's Dental Health Month. Explain that the newspaper articles were prepared as a public service to the community. Follow up with a call to the editor to determine if and when the articles might be placed, or whether more information is desired.

Placing the organization's name and the spokesperson's name in the copy will customize the enclosed samples. The articles may be useful when promoting your society's events. For example, an article on sealants can help publicize an upcoming presentation or screening.

While an organization may be credited as the source for these articles, it is inappropriate for an individual to have the articles published under his or her name, implying authorship. Such an

Are you prepared for a dental emergency?

Thousands of dental emergencies—from injuries to a painful, abscessed tooth—take place every day. Would you know what to do if your child broke a tooth or had a tooth knocked out while playing outdoors? What if you had a bad toothache in the middle of the night and couldn't get to the dentist until the next day? Knowing what to do can lessen the pain and save a tooth that might otherwise be lost.

Keep your dental office phone number and an emergency number where the dentist can be reached after hours with other emergency numbers, such as your family doctor, and fire and police departments. Some families post these numbers on the refrigerator or inside a kitchen cabinet door near the phone. Call the dentist immediately for instructions on how to handle a dental emergency.

Toothache: Rinse the mouth with warm water to clean it out. Gently use dental floss or an interdental cleaner to remove any food or other debris that may be caught between the teeth. Never put aspirin or any other painkiller against the gums near the aching tooth. This could burn gum tissue. If the toothache persists, try to see the dentist. Don't rely on painkillers. They may temporarily relieve pain but your dentist should evaluate the condition.

Knocked-out (avulsed) tooth: Try to find the tooth! This may not be as easy as you think if the injury took place on a playground, basketball court or while skateboarding, so try to stay calm. Hold the tooth by the crown and rinse the root in water if the tooth is dirty. Don't scrub it or remove any attached tissue fragments. If it's possible, gently insert and hold the tooth in its socket while you head to the dentist. If that's not possible, put the tooth in a cup of milk and bring it to the dentist. Time is critical for successful reimplantation, so try to get to your dentist immediately.

Broken tooth: Rinse your mouth with warm water to clean the area. Use cold compresses on the outside of the cheek to help reduce the swelling.

Tongue or lip bites or wounds: Clean the area gently with a clean cloth and apply cold compresses to reduce any swelling. If the bleeding can't be controlled, go to a hospital emergency room or clinic. You may be able to reduce bleeding from the tongue by pulling it forward and using gauze to put pressure on the wound.

Objects caught between teeth: Try to gently remove the object with dental floss. Never use a sharp instrument to remove any object that is stuck between your teeth. If you can't dislodge the object with floss, contact your dentist.

Possible broken jaw: Apply cold compresses cod

Sipping, Snacking and Tooth Decay

Many parents across the country will issue a common refrain at dinnertime tonight: "You'd better eat that--it's good for you!" There's another old favorite in the parental arsenal of dietary admonitions: "Don't eat that—it'll rot your teeth!" Now more than ever, kids are faced with a bewildering array of food choices -- from fresh produce to sugar-laden soft drinks.

Mouth guards: Sports equipment that protects the smile

It's easy to take some things for granted until they're suddenly gone. Have you ever thought about how it would feel if you lost one or two of your front teeth? You'd probably avoid smiling. It would be uncomfortable talking with someone face-to-face. It wouldn't be easy pronouncing certain words. And how about eating an apple? Until your teeth are gone, you might not miss them.

Each year, thousands of teens get hurt on the playing field, the basketball court, or while skateboarding, biking or during other activities. Blows to the face in nearly every sport can injure your teeth, lips, cheeks and tongue.

A properly fitted mouth guard, or mouth protector, is an important piece of athletic gear that can protect your teeth and smile. You may have seen them used in contact sports, such as football, boxing, and ice hockey.

However, you don't have to be on the football field to benefit from a mouth guard. New findings in sports dentistry show that even in non-contact sports such as gymnastics, rollerblading, and field hockey, mouth guards help protect teeth. Many experts recommend that a mouth guard be worn for any recreational activity that poses a risk of injury to the mouth.

There are three types of mouth guards: The ready-made, or stock, mouth guard; the mouth-formed boil and bite mouth guard; and the custom-made mouth guard made by your dentist. All three mouth guards provide protection but vary in comfort and cost.

The most effective mouth guard should have several features: It should be resilient, tear-resistant and comfortable. It should fit properly, be durable and easy to clean, and not restrict your speech or breathing.

Generally,

Oral Piercing: Not as safe as you think

Piercing, like tattooing, is just one of today's popular forms of body art and self-expression. Piercing may seem daring, cool and totally safe because some celebrities use piercing to flaunt their particular style or attitude. But piercing the tongue, lips, cheeks or uvula (the tiny tissue that hangs at the back of the throat) is not as safe as some would have you believe. That's because the mouth's moist environment—home to huge amounts of breeding bacteria—is an ideal place for infection.

An oral piercing can interfere with speech, chewing or swallowing. That may seem like a mere inconvenience until you consider that it may also cause:

- Excessive drooling (something you won't see in hip fashion magazines!)
- Infection, pain and swelling
- Chipped or cracked teeth
- Injuries to the gums
- Damage to fillings
- Increased saliva flow
- Hypersensitivity to metals
- Scar tissue
- Nerve damage

These harmful effects can happen during the piercing, soon after, or even long after the procedure.

An infection can quickly become life threatening if it's not treated promptly. For example, oral piercing carries a potential risk of endocarditis, an inflammation of the heart valves or tissues. Bacteria can enter the bloodstream through the piercing site in the mouth and travel to the heart, where it can colonize on heart abnormalities. This is a risk for people with heart conditions and, in the worst of cases, results in death.

After a piercing the tongue may swell. There have been reports of swelling serious enough to block the airway. And it's very possible to puncture a nerve during a tongue piercing. If this happens, you may [t o trcinway.c](http://t.o.trcinway.c)

Quitting Tobacco: You can do it!

Do you smoke or use chewing tobacco? Rarely a day goes by without a magazine, newspaper, or TV news report

Sippy Cups and Your Child's Teeth

As soon as teeth appear in the mouth, decay can occur. One of the risk factors for early childhood caries (sometimes called baby bottle tooth decay or nursing mouth syndrome) is frequent and prolonged exposure of a baby's teeth to liquids, such as fruit juice, milk or formula, which all contain sugar.

Tooth decay can occur when a baby is put to bed with a bottle. Infants should finish their naptime or bedtime bottle before going to bed. Because decay can destroy the teeth of an infant or young child, you should encourage your children to drink from a cup by their first birthdays.

Many training cups, also called sippy or tippy cups, are available in stores. Many are no spill cups, which are essentially baby bottles in disguise.