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Policy on Emergency Oral Care for Infants, Children, Adolescents, and Individuals with Special Health Care Needs

Latest Revision

2021

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry recognizes emergency care for infants, children, adolescents, and individuals with special health care needs is an essential duty of every dentist. The American Dental Association's *Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct* states that "dentists shall be obliged to make reasonable arrangements for the emergency care of their patients of record".¹ The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry encourages dentists to provide instructions to the parent² for accessing emergency care. Dental emergencies include, but are not limited to, facial swelling, infections, uncontrolled bleeding, pain, and oral-facial trauma.³ Availability of after-hours emergency care is an important aspect of continuously accessible care provided through a dental home.⁴ Additionally, when consulted for a dental emergency by patients not of record, the dentist should make reasonable arrangements for emergency dental care. If emergency dental treatment is provided, the dentist should recommend that the patient return to his dental home unless the parent expresses a different preference.¹

This document was developed by the Policy and Review Committee and adopted in 1976.⁵ This document is an update from the last revision in 2017.⁶

References

1. American Dental Association. Principles of Ethics and Code of Professional Conduct. Available at: "https://www.ada.org/~media/ADA/Member%20Center/Ethics/ADA_Code_Of_Ethics_November_2020.pdf?la=en". Accessed February 21, 2021.
2. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. Overview. The Reference Manual of Pediatric Dentistry. Chicago, Ill.: American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry; 2020:7-9.
3. American Dental Association. What Constitutes a Dental Emergency? March 31, 2020. Available at: "https://success.ada.org/~media/CPS/Files/Open%20Files/ADA_COVID19_Dental_Emergency_DDS.pdf". Accessed June 3, 2021.
4. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. Policy on the dental home. The Reference Manual of Pediatric Dentistry. Chicago, Ill.: American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry; 2020:43-4.
5. American Academy of Pedodontics. Emergency dental care for children. San Antonio, Texas. May, 1976. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry Reference Manual 1991-1992. Chicago, Ill: American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry; 1991:26.
6. American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. Policy on emergency oral care for infants, children, adolescents, and individuals with special health care needs. *Pediatr Dent* 2017;39(special issue):46.