



## Mouth Injury

### What is a mouth injury?

Small cuts and scrapes inside the mouth heal up beautifully in 3 or 4 days. Infections of mouth injuries are rare. You'll have difficulty finding where the injury was in a few weeks. Cuts of the tongue and insides of the cheeks are usually due to accidentally biting oneself during eating. Cuts and bruises of the lips are usually due to falls. A tear of the piece of tissue connecting the upper lip to the gum is very common. It can look terrible and bleed a lot until pressure is applied, but it is harmless.

The potentially serious mouth injuries are those to the tonsil, soft palate, or back of the throat (as from falling with a pencil in the mouth). Prevent these injuries by teaching your child not to run or play with any long object in the mouth. Cuts in the mouth usually don't require stitches except for loose flaps of tissue or gaping wounds of the tongue.

### How can I take care of my child?

- **Stop any bleeding** Press the bleeding site against the teeth or jaw for 10 minutes. For bleeding from the tongue, squeeze the bleeding site with sterile gauze. Once bleeding from inside the lip stops, don't pull the lip out again to look at it. Every time you do, the bleeding will start again.
- **Pain relief** Put a piece of ice or Popsicle on the area that was injured as often as necessary. If there is pain, give acetaminophen (Tylenol) or ibuprofen (Advil). Don't give aspirin because it may prolong the bleeding. For a day or so, offer your child a soft diet. Avoid any salty or citrus foods that might sting. Keep food out of the wound by rinsing the area well with warm water immediately after meals.

### When should I call Idaho Falls Pediatrics?

Call IMMEDIATELY if:

- There is a cut that is deep or gaping.
- The injury is to the back of the throat, tonsil, or soft palate.

Call during office hours if:

- The area looks infected, especially if the pain or swelling increases after 48 hours. (Note: Any healing wound in the mouth is normally white for several days.)
- A fever (over 100F, or 37.8C) occurs.
- You have other concerns or questions

\*NOTE: This information is provided as a public educational service. The information does not replace any of the instructions your physician gives you. If you have a medical emergency please call 911 or call the Hospital at (208) 529-6111. If you have questions about your child's care, please call Idaho Falls Pediatrics at (208) 522-4600.