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Introduction

Complaints pertaining to teeth are very common, and patients frequently utilize emergency departments (EDs) for their initial care. Most patients understand that definitive care must be provided by a dentist or oral surgeon, but either a lack of financial resources, inability to contact their dentist, severe pain, or acute trauma leads patients to EDs first. While treating dental emergencies in the ED can be difficult, challenging, and frustrating, it also can be immensely satisfying when the emergency physician has a basic understanding of den-

tal anatomy and understands the simple techniques required to relieve pain and preserve teeth. Many emergency physicians are called upon to treat dental problems, and it is essential to have a diagnostic and treatment plan to facilitate patient care. The treatment of dental emergencies mostly is extrapolated from the literature of other specialties such as dentistry and oral surgery. There are very few evidence-based articles in the emergency medicine literature, and much of the information presented in this review comes from the dental and oral surgery literature, as well as from a few ED outcome studies.¹⁻³

Management of Dental Emergencies

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