

# Toothache

## Definition

- Pain or discomfort in a tooth

## Health Information

### Causes

- Main cause: tooth decay
- Food wedged between the teeth
- Injured tooth

### Tooth Abscess and Severe Pain

- A tooth abscess is an infection within and around the tooth. It can cause severe pain not helped by normal pain medicines.
- Root canal therapy is needed to cure this problem. Root canals are done by a special dentist called an endodontist. Your child's regular dentist can refer you to one.
- In the meantime, call your dentist's office. The pain can usually be brought under control with an antibiotic drug by mouth. Most often, this is penicillin.

## Care Advice

1. **Overview:**
  - Most toothaches don't last too long. They are due to a sensitive tooth.
  - If the pain becomes worse or doesn't go away, call your dentist. The pain could be due to a small cavity.
  - Here is some care advice that should help.
2. **Floss:**
  - Floss on either side of the painful tooth to remove any wedged food.
3. **Pain Medicine:**
  - To help with the pain, give acetaminophen (such as Tylenol) or ibuprofen. Use as needed.
4. **Cold Pack:**
  - Put a cold pack or ice in a wet washcloth on the painful jaw. Do this for 20 minutes.
5. **Antibiotic by Mouth:**
  - An antibiotic may be prescribed if a tooth abscess is suspected.
  - This medicine will kill the bacteria deep in the tooth.
  - Give the antibiotic as directed.
  - Try not to forget any of the doses.
6. **What to Expect:**
  - Most minor causes of toothache go away in less than a day.

## Call Your Doctor If

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- Toothache lasts more than 24 hours
- The toothache gets worse
- You think your child needs to be seen
- Note: If your child has a dentist, call them instead of your doctor

### **Pediatric Care Advice**

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