

Questions-to-Ask Before an Emergency Visit

If you're facing severe tooth pain or a dental injury, it helps to walk in prepared. This free download lists the questions to ask an emergency dentist about care, cost, and what to expect—so you can make a clear plan.



SteadyTooth is a free matching service, not a dental provider or medical service, and does not give medical or dental advice or a diagnosis. The information here is general and educational. In a life-threatening emergency — trouble breathing or swallowing, swelling spreading toward the eye or neck, or uncontrolled bleeding — call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. Costs and care vary by case, dentist, city, and state; always confirm details directly with a licensed dentist.

What's inside the free checklist

This downloadable guide helps you ask the right questions during an urgent dental visit. It's written for real-life moments—when you're stressed, hurting, and trying to understand your options.

You'll find question prompts in plain language, including:

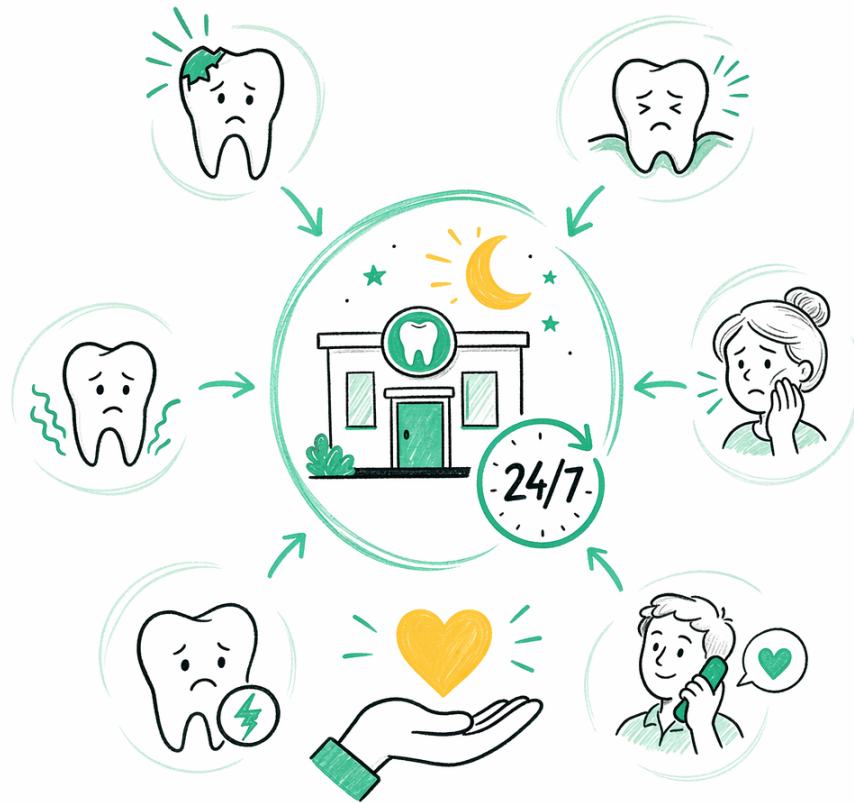
- 1 What's likely going on and what the dentist will do first
- 2 Whether imaging (like X-rays) is needed before treatment
- 3 What treatment options are available for your situation
- 4 What the plan is for pain control and safety
- 5 What follow-up care is recommended afterward
- 6 How cost is handled for emergency visits
- 7 What the total cost range could be (and what affects the final price)
- 8 Payment options and whether your insurance can be used (rules vary by state)
- 9 Any paperwork you should bring
- 10 When to return if symptoms don't improve

Who this download helps most

This checklist is for people in the United States who need urgent dental help and want to feel more in control. It's especially helpful if you're a new immigrant or a non-native English speaker, or if you're worried you won't be able to explain yourself clearly.

It can also help if you have questions about cost, emergency vs. non-emergency care, or what to expect during an after-hours visit. Dental coverage rules vary by state, so these prompts are designed to guide the conversation—without assuming anything.

If you're unsure whether your situation counts as an emergency, you can also review our [dental emergency symptoms](/symptoms/) page.



How to use the checklist (before and during your visit)

Use this guide as a “conversation starter.” You don’t need to memorize it. Bring it with you or review it quickly before you call.

- 1 Read the sections that match your situation (pain, swelling, broken/knocked-out tooth).
- 2 Take a few questions with you so you’re not scrambling in the moment.
- 3 If language is a barrier, ask whether an interpreter or translated materials are available.
- 4 During the visit, ask for clarity on the next steps: what they recommend now, what comes next, and what to watch for.
- 5 If cost is a concern, ask for a cost range and what it includes.

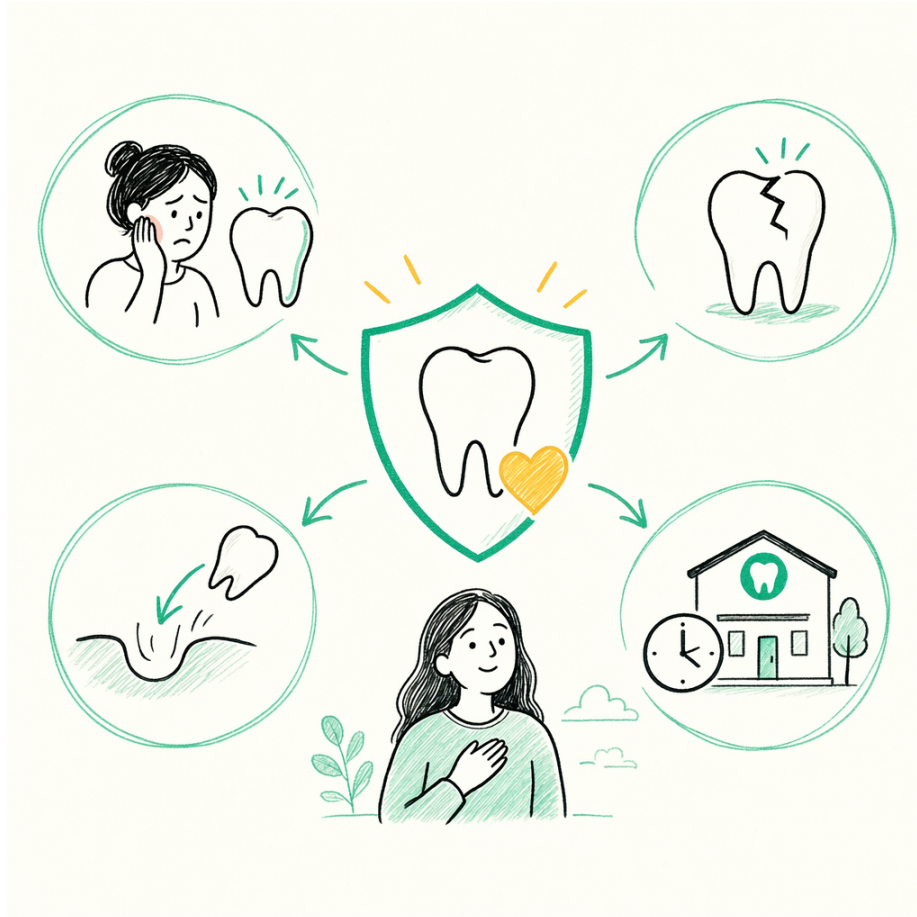
If you haven’t found an emergency dentist yet, you can use SteadyTooth to get connected with a nearby emergency dentist through our [\[get matched\]/\(get-matched/\)](#) process. (Contact details only—no medical information needed.)

When not to wait: call 911 or go to the ER

A dental problem can sometimes become life-threatening. If you have any of these red flags, don’t rely on a checklist—get urgent medical help right away:

- Trouble breathing or trouble swallowing
- Swelling spreading toward the eye or into the neck
- Uncontrolled bleeding

In those cases, call 911 or go to the nearest ER.



What SteadyTooth adds (and what this download doesn't do)

This checklist is a practical guide for your conversation with a licensed emergency dentist. It's for information and preparation—not diagnosis.

SteadyTooth helps you get connected with a same-day or after-hours emergency dentist near you. When you submit contact details, we only collect what we need to match you—no symptoms, no health records, and no treatment details.

If you want more background before you go, explore our [\[guides\]](#)/[/guides/](#) and learn what to expect for common urgent dental situations.



Need a dentist now?

SteadyTooth is a free service that helps you find a same-day or after-hours emergency dentist near you, in your language when possible. Visit **steadytooth.com** and tell us where you are and how to reach you — no medical details needed. In a life-threatening emergency, call 911.