

Toothache

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW:

What is a toothache and what causes it?

A toothache is pain that is caused by irritation of the nerves in the center of tooth. The irritation may be caused by several problems, such as a cavity, an infection, a cracked tooth, or gum disease.

How is a toothache diagnosed?

Doctor will examine tooth and mouth. He may also examine face and neck. patient may need x-rays to check for an infection or cracked tooth.

How is a toothache treated?

Treatment depends on the cause of toothache. Patient may need any of the following:

- **NSAIDs**, such as ibuprofen, help decrease swelling, pain, and fever. This medicine is available with or without a doctor's order
- **Acetaminophen** decreases pain and fever.
- **Prescription pain medicine** may be given.
- **Antibiotics** help treat or prevent a bacterial infection.

How to manage toothache?

- **Rinse mouth with warm salt water** 4 times a day or as directed.
- **Eat soft foods** to help relieve pain caused by chewing.
- **Apply ice on jaw or cheek** for 15 to 20 minutes every hour or as directed. Use an ice pack, or put crushed ice in a plastic bag. Cover it with a towel before patient apply it. Ice helps prevent tissue damage and decreases swelling and pain.

How to prevent a toothache?

- Brush teeth at least 2 times a day.
- Use dental floss to clean between teeth at least 1 time a day.
- See dentist regularly every 6 months for dental cleanings and oral exams.

Reference: Micromedex's Care Notes System Online 2.0

