



Losing a filling or crown can happen at the most inconvenient times—even on a weekend or holiday—making it difficult to see your dentist immediately. Here are some how-tos on handling these situations.

#### HOW DID THIS HAPPEN?

If you lose a filling or a crown, it may be due to chewing or biting down on something hard, but it could also be due to tooth decay forming under the filling or crown. The weakened or exposed area could be sensitive to heat, cold, sweets or pressure.

#### WHAT SHOULD I DO?

Call your dentist immediately to schedule an appointment. If you can, keep the filling or crown—your dentist may be able to use it to repair the tooth or help determine the cause of the problem.

#### WHAT IF I CAN'T REACH MY DENTIST?

You may be able to place a crown back on the tooth temporarily by applying a dab of petroleum jelly inside the crown and placing it back on the tooth, creating a temporary seal. If you are considering the temporary crown cements sold commercially, use caution, as they can harden quickly and if not applied correctly, can cause a major problem with both your bite and the way the crown looks in your mouth.

You can also use an over-the-counter temporary dental filling material or orthodontic wax to fill the empty tooth. Remember, you should avoid using the tooth needing repair and see a dentist immediately.

Keep in mind, a temporary fix is just that—temporary. Your teeth are still susceptible to decay and shifting position until a permanent filling or crown is placed. The longer you wait, the greater the chance that you will have more problems and expense, so see your dentist immediately!

**For information on the TRICARE Dental Program, or to find more “Dental Health 911” tips, visit us online at [www.TRICAREdentalprogram.com](http://www.TRICAREdentalprogram.com).**