

# Home Remedies for a Toothache

Your head pounds, your gums throb, and your mouth is sore and tender. You've got a toothache. See your dentist ASAP. In the meantime, use these home remedies to get short-term relief.



## Saltwater Rinse

Until you can get to the dentist, one of the best things you can do is swish warm, salty water around in your mouth. A good mix is 1/2 teaspoon table salt to 8 ounces of water. Spit it out, don't swallow it. You can also gently floss around the sore tooth to remove any bits of food that may be stuck.



## Cold Compress

If your face is swollen, put an ice pack on your cheek. It may help ease the pain, especially if you've chipped your chopper or knocked it loose. Swelling could also mean you have an abscess, a sac of pus and gunk deep in the roots of your tooth. This can cause serious infection in your jaw and other teeth. Signs include fever and red gums.



## OTC Anesthetics

Apply these pain-relieving gels and liquids directly to the sore tooth and nearby gums. They contain benzocaine, which will numb your mouth for a little while. Beware: They're meant for short-term use only.



## Ice

Put some ice in your hand, on the same side of the body as your sore tooth. Rub the ice in the space between your thumb and forefinger for 7 minutes, or until the area turns numb. Why does it work? Researchers believe ice stops pain signals to your brain.



## Clove Oil

This natural remedy numbs the pain. Rub it directly on the sore area, or soak a cotton ball and dab it against the tooth and gums. It may be as effective as benzocaine, the numbing ingredient in over-the-counter toothache gels.



## Oil Pulling

In this ancient Hindu practice, you swirl oil (usually sunflower or sesame) around your mouth. Does it improve oral health? A small study in India found that it can treat gingivitis, but the jury's still out as to whether it's a true toothache remedy.



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