



Do you need a mouthguard?

What is a Mouthguard?

A mouthguard is a cushioning appliance made of flexible material that fits snugly over the teeth to help prevent injuries to the teeth and mouth. An effective mouthguard is like a 'crash helmet' for teeth and jaws.



Who should wear a mouthguard?

Anyone who plays a sport that carries a major risk of a knock to the face should wear a mouthguard. This includes sports like ... Football, hockey, rugby, soccer, basketball, netball, water polo and volleyball.

Wear a mouthguard while playing and training. Also wear it when doing fun activities like rollerblading, skateboarding, mountain bike riding, trampolining and horse riding to protect your smile.



What are the advantages of using a mouthguard?

A mouthguard can help cushion a strong blow to the face that otherwise might result in an injury to the mouth. It acts as a shock absorber protecting the teeth and lower jaw from breaking and prevents you from accidentally biting your lips, tongue or cheeks. A misdirected elbow in a one-on-one basketball game or a fall off a skateboard can leave you with chipped or broken teeth, nerve damage to a tooth or even tooth loss.

Which type is best?

The best mouthguard is one fitted to your mouth that doesn't restrict breathing. It should be stable, comfortable, allow talking and not cause choking.

'Off-the-shelf' mouthguards available at sport stores and chemists are cheap and readily available. The 'one size fits all' mouthguards often cannot be made to fit the mouth properly, whereas a 'Boil and Bite' mouthguard (mouth-formed using warm water) carefully adapted to fit the mouth, can provide a close fit. 'Custom-made' mouthguards obtained from a dental practitioner provides the best comfort and fit. Remember, as the mouth grows, a new mouthguard is needed and ideally should be replaced after each season as they can wear down over time, making them less effective.



What about braces?

If you play sport or participate in activities that have a high risk of a knock to the face and jaws, you should wear a mouthguard: mouthguards can be made to fit over braces. It will be a cushion between the braces and your cheek or lips.

How do you care for a mouthguard?

- Rinse the mouthguard in mouthwash or mild antiseptic just before use.
- Rinse the mouthguard with water before putting into mouth.
- Clean mouthguard after use by washing with mild soap and cold water.
- Store dry mouthguard in a rigid box and away from heat.
- Call your dental practitioner if there are any problems.


Accidents happen, and dental injuries can be disfiguring and costly to repair!


Prevention makes good sense, so play safe with a mouthguard!

For further information please discuss with your dental practitioner

Would you like more information or to provide feedback?

This document can be made available in alternative formats such as braille, audio tape or electronically on request.

 Communications Officer, Dental Health Services
Locked Bag 15, Bentley Delivery Centre, WA 6983

 (08) 9313 0555

 publications@dental.health.wa.gov.au

 www.dental.wa.gov.au

Any images used in this document are for illustrative purposes only, as they are only offered as a general guide.



© 2020 Dental Health Services WA. All rights reserved.