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
- rugby
- basketball
- water polo
- hockey
- soccer
- netball
- 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 talk between mates and not cause choking.

Off-the-shelf mouthguards available at sport stores and chemists are cheap but often cannot be made to fit the mouth properly. A custom made mouthguard obtained from a dental professional provides the best comfort and fit. Remember though, as the mouth grows, a new guard is needed.

What about braces?

A mouthguard is recommended for people who wear braces as it can help prevent damage to the brackets from a blow to the face and provides a barrier between the braces and cheek or lips.

Talk to your dentist or orthodontist about selecting a mouthguard that is best for you. If you have a retainer or other removable appliance, do not wear it during any contact sports.

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 professional 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!

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