

Other safety tips

- Mouthguards should be worn at all times during training and games.
- Players undergoing orthodontic treatment can have a custom-fitted mouthguard made by their dentist to fit comfortably and accurately over their braces.
- The cost of an injury to the teeth or jaws far exceeds the cost of any type of mouthguard.



For further information contact

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References

- Tham, R. and E. Cassell, A systematic review of the effectiveness of mouthguards to prevent orofacial injury in sports. Victorian Injury Surveillance Unit, Monash University Accident Research Centre, Editor. 2006, Monash University.

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SMARTPLAY

Mouthguards Preventing Dental Injuries in sport



Preventing dental injuries in sport

Dental injuries can be painful, disfiguring, expensive to treat and often require long-term management. Injuries can include cuts to the lips, gums, cheeks, tongue and face; chipped or broken teeth; knocked out teeth; and in severe cases a broken jaw. Such injuries may result in the need to take time off work or school to recover, lengthy treatment and long-term physical and monetary costs.

How many injuries?

- Injury surveillance data shows that at least 2000 dental injuries were treated in Victorian hospital emergency departments between 2002 and 2004.
- Dental injuries predominantly occur in people aged under 25 years of age (71%).

When do dental injuries occur?

- Approximately 44% of these injuries occurred during active recreation/leisure activities such as cycling, skateboarding and riding a scooter.
- Between 5% and 14% were sustained during organised sports, including football, basketball, netball, cricket, hockey and soccer.
- People with protrusive front teeth, inadequate lip coverage over their teeth or have orthodontic treatment are often at greater risk of dental injury.

The importance of wearing a mouthguard

Wearing an appropriately designed and made mouthguard while participating in sport will protect against dental injuries.

Players of all ages involved in sports and activities where they are at risk of an injury to the face should protect their teeth with a properly fitted mouthguard. This includes sports where there is a risk of collision, falling and/or contact from other players or equipment such as balls, bats, sticks or racquets.

Important features of a protective mouthguard

- Comfortable but tight fit within mouth
- Allows normal breathing and swallowing
- Allows normal speech
- Correct thickness (4mm) over the teeth to provide protection against impact
- Does not cause gagging
- Odourless and tasteless

Three types of mouthguards available

1. **Custom-fitted** mouthguards are considered to provide the best protection of the teeth, lips and jaw. Custom-fitted mouthguards are made by a dentist or a dental technician to fit the individual's mouth, and provide the best protection due to their close fit, comfort and cushioning (shock absorption) effect.
2. **Boil and bite** mouthguards are directly formed to the upper teeth after the lining is softened in boiling water. They can be uncomfortable if not properly fitted, and provide limited protection. They should be replaced each season.
3. **Stock** (ready-to-wear) mouthguards come pre-formed and are the least expensive type of mouthguard, but also provide the least amount of protection, fit and comfort.

Caring for your mouthguard

- Rinse in soap and warm (not hot) water or mouthwash after each use and allow it to air-dry.
- Keep mouthguard in a well-ventilated plastic storage box when not in use, (box should have several holes in it).
- Do not leave your mouthguard in direct sunlight, in a closed car or in the car's glovebox.
- Ensure your mouthguard is in good condition before each use.
- Get your dentist to check your mouthguard when you go for your check-up. Replace it if it is damaged.

