

**There are easier ways to  
protect your child's mouth  
from sports injury.**



**The ADA recommends a custom-fitted mouthguard as it significantly reduces mouth injury.**

For more information about mouthguards, please read the back of this poster,  
talk to your dentist or visit:  
[www.mouthguardawareness.info](http://www.mouthguardawareness.info)



**Australian Dental Association**

# Mouthguard Information

## Why wear a mouthguard?

### Who should wear a mouthguard?

Anyone who participates in a sport that carries a risk of a knock to the face should wear a mouthguard.

This includes sports where contact is part of the game like football, boxing and rugby, and also collision sports where contact often happens but it is not expected or allowed. These include basketball, hockey, water polo, lacrosse, netball, baseball, softball, squash, soccer, BMX bike riding, horse riding, skateboarding, in-line skating, trampolining, cricket (wicket keeping or batting without a helmet), water skiing and snow ski racing.

### Why you need a mouthguard?

A mouthguard helps absorb the shock experienced by a blow to the face that might otherwise result in an injury to the mouth or jaw. A heavy collision can result in chipped or broken teeth, internal damage to a tooth, tooth loss, injuries to the soft tissue of the mouth, and, in severe cases, concussion or a broken jaw.

Injuries like these can lead to long and potentially expensive treatment to restore the teeth and mouth back to normal function and appearance.

According to Australian research, sports injuries account for about one-third of traumatic injuries to teeth. The Sports Medicine Association reports that 50% of children experience some form of dental injury.

Statistics like these reinforce the importance of mouthguards.

### When do I wear a mouthguard?

Mouthguards should be worn whilst playing and training for any sport that could involve contact to the face.

## Types of mouthguards - what type should I use?

While there are two specific types of mouthguards - the custom-fitted mouthguard and the 'over-the-counter' or 'boil and bite' mouthguard, the Australian Dental Association recommends that for proper protection, the custom-fitted mouthguard is essential.

Custom-fitted mouthguards are made by your dentist and constructed directly from a mould taken of your teeth. The main advantage of custom fitting is that it allows the dentist to accurately assess your mouth and provide the optimum dimensions, coverage and thickness of the mouthguard for you. The dentist can also take a history of previous injuries and assess the type of mouthguard appropriate for your sport.

These mouthguards are comfortable, allow you to talk easily and do not restrict breathing.

Dentists recommend custom-fitted mouthguards as they offer the best protection and fit compared to a mouthguard you buy over the counter.

The Australian Dental Association and Standards Australia do not recommend the over-the-counter or boil and bite mouthguards. They are usually poorly fitting and less comfortable to wear because they haven't been specifically fitted to the shape of your mouth and teeth. This lessens their effectiveness and can risk even greater damage to teeth.

However, an over-the-counter mouthguard is far better than not wearing a mouthguard at all. If you do need to use an over-the-counter mouthguard, be sure to carefully follow the directions, otherwise you can end up with a poorly fitting mouthguard that offers inadequate protection.

### How long will my mouthguard last?

A mouthguard should be reviewed every 12 months by your dentist to ensure it continues to fit correctly. A mouthguard may need to be replaced if major changes occur to the teeth like restorations or loss of teeth. Children's mouthguards need to be changed more frequently as their mouth can change when they grow or when adult teeth push through.

### How do I clean my mouthguard?

Mouthguards need to be rinsed in cold, soapy water after use, dried and stored in a plastic container. As mouthguards can distort under higher temperatures, they should be kept in a cool place.

## What to do if a tooth is knocked out

Wearing a properly fitted mouthguard while participating in sport will protect against dental injuries. Despite this, accidents can happen and teeth can sometimes be knocked out. The following tips outline what to do if a tooth is knocked out, how to best prepare the injury for treatment, and reduce the likelihood of any long-term damage.

If a tooth is knocked out, the following steps should be taken:

- Remain calm, find the tooth, handle it by the crown only and ensure it's clean. The crown is the smooth white part of the tooth that is normally visible in the mouth.
- If the root is dirty, and the patient is calm and conscious, they can gently suck the tooth clean. Alternatively, rinse the tooth in milk or very briefly, water.
- Immediately replant the tooth in the socket (to maximise the chance of effective reimplantation this should ideally not be delayed more than 30 minutes), making sure it is facing the right way around.
- Hold the tooth in place. Aluminium foil may be used to help stabilize the tooth, or bite gently on gauze or a soft cloth.
- If you are unable to replant the tooth, keep it moist by putting the tooth in a cup of milk, by sealing it in plastic wrap or place it in the patient's mouth next to the cheek, if the patient is able to do so, and:
- **Seek Immediate Dental Treatment - Time is Critical.**

## DO NOT

- Hold the tooth by the root surface
- Scrape or rub the root surface
- Let the tooth dry out
- Rinse or store the tooth in water for more than a second or two
- Remove any tissue fragments from the tooth

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