



This video resources is provided to help teach kids why it's so important to wear a mouthguard while playing sports.

Did you know that baseball and basketball have the highest incidence of sports-related dental injuries in children ages 7-17 than any other sport?

Wondering why?

Mouthguards are not required for participation in these sports, even though the National Federation of State High School Association's Sports Medicine Advisory Committee recommends that athletes should wear a mouthguard if playing a sport with a bat, ball or stick.

How Mouthguards Work

Before high school football players were required to wear mouthguards and facemasks, 50% of players' injuries were oral-facial. Now they represent less than 1% of injuries. This is because a mouthguard helps absorb the shock from a blow to the face that might otherwise result in an injury to the mouth or jaw. It can limit the risk for chipped or broken teeth, internal damage to a tooth, tooth loss, and even a broken jaw. A mouthguard also can protect the soft tissues of your cheek lining, tongue, and lips.

Choosing a Mouthguard

Ideally, a mouthguard should be protective, comfortable, resilient, tear resistant, odorless, tasteless, not bulky, cause minimal interference with speaking and breathing, and have excellent retention. There are three basic types of mouthguards available:

- **Stock mouthguards** are relatively inexpensive and have a pre-formed shape. But since the fit can't be adjusted, they're less effective than a fitted option. And, sometimes they don't stay in place, which may cause impediments in breathing and speech.
- **Boil-and-bite mouthguards** can be purchased at many sporting goods stores and can be molded to the individual's mouth, usually by boiling the mouthguard in hot water to soften the plastic.
- **Custom-made mouthguards** are considered the best option. Since your dentist makes them from a mold of your teeth, they fit tightly and correctly. Although a custom mouthguard is the most expensive option available, it's a solid investment when compared with the thousands of dollars in dental work it can take to replace a lost tooth.

Wear Mouthguards During Practice & Games

Although mouthguards are only mandatory for some youth sports, such as ice hockey, football and lacrosse, dental professionals recommend they be worn for all athletic activities where there is a strong potential for contact with other participants or hard surfaces. This includes baseball, basketball, bicycling, boxing, gymnastics, martial arts, skate boarding, soccer, softball, surfing, volleyball, water polo and wrestling.

It's also important for young athletes to get in the habit of wearing mouthguards whenever they participate in sports. According to Safe Kids USA, most organized sports-related injuries occur during practice rather than games.