

Use of Mouth Guards to Prevent Injury

Impact injuries to the dentition, such as those occurring during participation in sports, often result in the need for endodontic treatment. The American Association of Endodontists recommends the use of mouth guards during participation in sports as their use may minimize the effect of impact injuries on the dentition and supporting structures.

The most commonly used oral device is of the “over the counter” variety found in sporting goods stores. These are typically molded to an individual’s dentition using a “boil and bite” type material. Although they provide some manner of protection, studies show that these mouth guards often lack proper extensions and repeatedly do not cover all the posterior teeth. Custom mouth guards obtained with the dentist provide a superiorly adapted appliance that is constructed of a more comfortable material, improving compliance and durability, than the store-bought variety. Studies have also shown virtually no interferences with breathing.

Participants in sporting events are encouraged to contact their dentist for fabrication of a custom mouth guard. In addition, organizers and coaches of children’s sports are encouraged to recommend and/or require the use of mouth guards for all of their participants.

References

1. DeYoung AK, Robinson E, Godwin WC. Comparing comfort and wearability: Custom-made vs. self-adapted mouthguards. *J Am Dent Assoc* 1994;125(8):1112-8
2. Sliwkanic L, Ouanounou, A. Mouthguards in dentistry: Current recommendations for dentists. *Dental Traumatology* 10.1111/edt.12686, 37, 5(661-671), (2021)
3. Mark, A. Protect your smile with a mouthguard. *J Am Dent Assoc.* 2024; 155(3):270.

The guidance in this statement is not intended to substitute for a clinician’s independent judgment in light of the conditions and needs of a specific patient.

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