

Healthy People Dental

Preventing Mouth Injuries in Athletes

With the beginning of the new school year, the sports season kicks in! Whether adult or children, a mouth guard is essential for all athletes.



If you're playing any contact sports such as football, hockey and boxing, the American Dental Association recommends wearing a mouth guard. Mouth guards can help protect your teeth from injury and trauma. Children and adults involved in incidental contact sports, like basketball, baseball, softball, wrestling, soccer and volleyball, should consider wearing a mouth guard to prevent injuries to the mouth. Mouth guards are available at most sporting goods stores; however, to ensure a mouth guard fits properly, contact your dentist for a consultation. If a custom-fit mouth guard isn't an option, try a "boil-and-bite" mouth guard. You can buy one in a sporting-goods store. You place the mouth guard in boiling water. Once the plastic is soft (but not too hot), you bite down on the mouth guard and mold the softened plastic around your teeth. If the mouth guard doesn't fit comfortably the first time, you can reheat it and do it again.



A study of high school athletes found that seventy-five percent of injuries occurred when mouth guards were not worn and forty percent occurred during baseball and basketball. Nine percent of all athletes suffered some type of oral injury while another three percent reported a loss of consciousness. Fifty-six percent of all concussions were suffered when mouth guards were not worn. Trauma related to sports is more prevalent than previously reported.

Both before and after wearing a mouth guard it's important to both brush and rinse your teeth. Doing this before you put the guard on helps to clean and rid the teeth of any bacteria that remains in the mouth so that it doesn't spread to the guard. The mouth is always full of bacteria of all forms, the good and the bad. Keeping your mouth clean is the only way to create a healthy balance. Brush and rinse after wearing a mouth guard to rid the mouth of any bacteria that may have been on the guard.

As hard as it may seem, especially during those finger biting moments of the game, discourage the habit of chewing on the mouth guard. Although it may seem harmless, chewing on the guard creates tiny holes. These holes can serve as a home for bacteria. Once this harmful bacteria is present, there is very little you can do to prevent it from spreading. A guard that is showing clearly visible signs of wear and tear probably needs to be replaced. It may even be helpful to take the mouth guard along with you to a dental appointment. Allow the dentist to look over it and advise you on whether it's time for a replacement.

Healthy Mouth Recipe

After School Fruit Pizzas

In a small bowl, mix 4 oz. of Neuchatel cheese with 4 tablespoons of powdered sugar. Top 4 rice cakes (any flavor you wish) with the cream cheese mixture. Top with assorted fruits like raspberries, blueberries, strawberries and pineapple.

Source: thefarmgirls.com

