

Why Your Child Needs to Wear a Mouthguard When Playing Sports



Playing sports comes with a lot of benefits and can help your child get exercise, learn how to work as part of a team, and make new friends. Unfortunately, sports are also a major cause of tooth loss in children and teens.

If your child is planning to participate in a sport, it's important that you make sure their teeth are well protected. Especially in contact sports such as football and hockey, losing teeth is a real concern.

While your child may already have some forms of protective gear for the body, protecting the teeth is overlooked by some parents. However, protecting your child's teeth is vitally important if they are participating in rough sports or outdoor activities.

Below we'll give you an overview of mouthguards for sports, and tell you everything you need to know to keep your child's teeth safe.

What Are Mouthguards?

While you may know them as either sports guards, mouthguards, or mouth protectors, they are all the same. A mouthguard is worn in the mouth and placed over the teeth to protect them from damage.

Mouthguards are a great tool that can prevent teeth from getting broken during sports and other activities. They are also very easy to use.

Your child will simply need to wear them in their mouth while playing sports or doing any activity where they may get a blow to the face or head.

Using a mouthguard will help your child protect their teeth and make sure no teeth get knocked out even if they take a hard blow to the face while playing sports or other activities.

Sports That Require Mouthguards

Mouthguards aren't required for all sports. Your child may not need a mouthguard for swimming activities or cross country running, for example. However, they are very important in some of the rougher sports where your child will be coming into contact with other kids or with a ball of some kind.

Mouthguards are essential for "contact sports" such as football, lacrosse, hockey, or rugby. "Non-contact sports" also may require a mouthguard. Sports such as basketball, baseball, soccer, mountain biking, gymnastics, and mountain biking can potentially be dangerous.

Basically, your child should wear a mouthguard when participating in any sport where they may experience an injury to the face or head. If a sport includes a lot of frequent contact and collisions, or if there are flying balls, pucks, or other items of some kind, then a mouthguard is essential.

Selecting the Right Mouthguard Type

When it comes time to select a mouthguard for your child there are several different options available. Below are the three main types of mouthguards that you can choose from.

Ready-made Mouthguards/Stock Mouthguards

Ready-made mouthguards, also known as stock mouthguards, are the cheapest and most easy-to-get type of mouthguards available.

These guards can be easily purchased off-the-shelf and will be ready for your child to wear immediately after purchasing.

However, the drawback to these guards is that they won't be specifically formed to fit your child's mouth. As a result, these mouthguards may be uncomfortable to wear compared to other types.

Boil and Bite Mouthguards

Boil and bite mouthguards can also be easily purchased from just about any drugstore, and are a step up from stock mouthguards.

After purchasing, you will have to do a bit of preparation first in order for your child to start using the boil and bite mouthguard.

First, you will have to use boiling water to soften the mouthguard. Then, after letting it cool down a bit, your child will need to bite down on the mouthguard. This will make a custom teeth impression in the guard.

As a result, you'll have a decent-fitting guard that is relatively comfortable. While not as comfortable as custom-made mouthguards, these mouthguards are a definite improvement over stock mouthguards.

Custom-Made Mouthguards

The most comfortable mouthguards for your child will be custom made by a dentist.

These mouthguards are fitted to a child's specific mouth anatomy and are much more comfortable than both stock mouthguards and boil and bite mouthguards.

However, the drawback to these custom guards is that they are more expensive than the other options. It will also be necessary to see a dentist in order to have a guard custom made for your child.

Caring for Your Child's Mouthguard

Mouthguards aren't very hard to take care of, but you do need to make sure to keep a mouthguard well maintained in order to ensure that it lasts.

You should always make sure that your child's mouthguard is rinsed out thoroughly before and after use. You should frequently take the time to wash the mouthguard with soapy water.

How Long Should Mouthguards Last?

Each time you wash a mouthguard you also need to make sure to check for signs of damage. Mouthguards will develop some wear and tear with regular usage. As a result, a mouthguard will become less effective for protecting your child's teeth over time.

For younger children, the fitting of mouthguards can be particularly tricky. Their mouths will continue to grow and teeth will develop rapidly. As your child grows older, the mouthguard may not fit as well, so it's important to check the fit from time to time.

You may eventually have to buy a new guard to make sure that your child has a mouthguard that fits and works well. As a general rule, it's a good idea to get your child fitted for a new mouthguard once each 6-month check up rolls around.

Final Thoughts

If your child is participating in sports or other outdoor activities, protecting their teeth should be a top priority. Playing sports can be an invaluable experience for your child.

However, it's crucial that you take the proper precautions to keep their pearly whites safe by making sure that they wear a mouthguard whenever they're playing sports.

If you're interested in getting a custom mouthguard made for your child, we can help. Contact us today to learn more about custom mouthguards and to set up an appointment.