

Sports and Your Mouth

About five million teeth are knocked out each year.¹

Each year, over 3.5 million kids aged 14 and younger need treatment for a sports injury.² About 775,000 of them are seen in the ER.² These statistics should not scare you or your child away from sports. The fact is that most of these injuries are preventable with mouth guards. Yet most children—84 percent—don't wear them.

Sports, whether organized or recreational, can be costly. The hockey sticks, helmets, and shoulder pads can set you back. But most schools don't require kids to wear mouth guards, so they don't.³ Mouth guards do not have to be expensive, and they protect the teeth and jaw from severe damage.



High-Risk Sports

Nearly half of head injuries come from activities involving speed and wheels—cycling, skating, and skateboarding.² Falls and collisions account for most jaw and tooth injuries, and up to 39 percent of dental injuries are related to sports.¹

Every dental association—from the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons to the American Dental Association recommends mouth guards for every sport. Baseball? Check. Basketball? Check. Football? Check. Soccer? Check. Every sport.¹

But your mouth isn't the only place vulnerable to injury. Helmets, goggles, and face shields protect the eyes, head, jaw, nose, and teeth.

In Case of a Knock-Out:⁴

What happens if your tooth is among the five million that gets knocked out? Follow these steps. You have about an hour, so act quickly.

- 1 Grab the tooth by the crown (chewing surface), not the root.
- 2 Rinse it gently with water, if necessary.
- 3 Put the tooth back in. Hold it by the crown, place it back in the socket, and push it gently. Hold it down with your finger or mouth.
- 4 If you cannot fit your tooth in the socket, keep it moist until you get to a dentist:
 - Place it in your mouth beside your cheek
 - Put it in milk
 - Do not put it in water
- 5 Take your tooth to the emergency room. It's best to get there within 30 minutes.

Get Ahead of the Game

There are many different types of mouth guards in a range of prices. The most expensive are custom-made by your dentist. These may be covered depending on diagnosis and plan. Boil-and-bite guards can be purchased in sporting goods stores. Boil these to soften them, then bite to make a semi-custom fit. Stock mouth guards are the least expensive. These can be bulky, but they still offer protection. Check out this guide to mouth guards: http://bit.ly/guardian_mouthguards.

Suit Up

No matter what your age or sport, your uniform should include protection. A mouth guard, goggles, helmet, and face protector can help keep you and your child from serious injury.

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1 https://myoms.org/facial_injury_infographic/, 2019, accessed November 2019.

2 <https://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/topic/default?id=sports-injury-statistics-90-P02787>, accessed November 2019.

3 <https://www.ada.org/en/press-room/news-releases/2013-archive/april/play-it-safe-prevent-facial-injuries-with-simple-s>, accessed November 2019.

4 <https://www.aae.org/patients/dental-symptoms/knocked-out-teeth/>, accessed November 2019.

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