

What type of Mouthguard should I wear?



Mouthguard Awareness Fact Sheet

Wearing a custom-fitted mouthguard while participating in sport is vitally important to help prevent dental injuries.

There are many types of mouthguards, from over-the-counter products to the professionally-fitted custom guard. The Australian Dental Association (ADA) recommends that self-fitted, over-the-counter mouthguards are inadequate and, for effective protection, a professionally-fitted custom mouthguard is essential. The lifetime cost of a dental injury justifies the expense of good protection to prevent the injury in the first place.

Custom-fitted mouthguards

A custom-fitted mouthguard is made by a dentist using an impression taken of your teeth and a plaster model. Custom fitting allows the dentist to accurately assess your mouth and provide the best fit, size, coverage and thickness in a mouthguard made especially for you. The dentist can also make an assessment of any risk factors you might have and recommend the best type of mouthguard appropriate for your sport.

Custom-fitted mouthguards are comfortable, allow you to talk, have maximum resistance against being dislodged and should not restrict breathing.

Over-the-counter mouthguards

These mouthguards are cheaper than custom-fitted mouthguards. These include stock mouthguards that have no fitting at all, and boil and bite mouthguards that are self fitted by softening them in hot water, inserting them in the mouth and allowing them to adapt to the shape of the mouth as they cool and set.

The ADA and Standards Australia do not recommend over the counter boil and bite mouthguards. They are poorly fitting and less comfortable to wear because they have not been specifically fitted to the shape of your mouth and teeth. This greatly lessens their effectiveness and can increase the risk of damage to teeth.

Is any sort of mouthguard better than none?

A boil and bite mouthguard may be a short-term choice if there is absolutely no alternative available, but even with careful attention to the directions, the best result is a poorly fitting mouthguard that offers inadequate protection. Some studies place their degree of protection only slightly better than wearing no mouthguard at all.

How long will my mouthguard last?

Your dentist should review your mouthguard every 12 months to ensure it fits correctly. Sometimes, a mouthguard needs to be replaced if major changes occur to the teeth, like restorations or adult teeth coming through.

How do I clean my mouthguard?

Mouthguards need to be rinsed in cold water after use, dried and stored in a plastic container. Mouthguards can distort under higher temperatures, so they should be kept in a cool place.

For more information on mouthguards and protecting teeth visit:
www.ada.org.au



Australian Dental Association