

## Preventing & Treating Dental Injuries

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- Dental injuries are the most common type of injuries to the face.
- Half of all dental injuries can be prevented.
- An athlete is 60 times more likely to cause damage to their teeth when not wearing a mouth guard.
- The cost of a broken tooth is more expensive than a mouth guard.
- 60% of facial injuries occur during sports practice.
- In the United States, 5 million teeth are knocked out each year – mainly front teeth.

### What is a mouth guard?

- A mouth guard is a flexible piece of plastic that fits around the upper teeth.
- A mouth guard should be worn when playing sports.

### Activities that call for mouth protection include:

- Baseball
- Basketball
- Lacrosse
- Racquetball
- Soccer
- Field Hockey
- Gymnastics
- Football
- Skateboarding
- Volleyball
- Roller Blading
- Bicycling
- Ice Hockey
- Squash
- Handball
- Martial Arts
- Boxing
- Wrestling

### Choosing a mouth guard

A mouth guard should:

- Be flexible
- Not tear
- Be comfortable
- Fit properly
- Be durable
- Be easy to clean
- Not get in the way of speaking or breathing
- Be odorless and tasteless

### Types of mouth guards

- **Stock Mouth Guards:** These are sold in sporting goods stores in sizes small, medium, and large and are held in place by biting down.
- **Boil and Bite Mouth Guards:** These are the most commonly used. They are softened in boiling water and then formed to fit the mouth. These can

be found in sporting goods stores and cost a little more than the stock mouth guards.

- **Custom Made Mouth Guards:** These are made by the dentist and are the most expensive type of mouth guard, but are the best at preventing injury.

### **Dental Injury**

- What do I do if a primary (baby) tooth is knocked out?
- Do not attempt to replace the primary tooth in the child's mouth.
- Control bleeding by applying firm but gentle pressure to the area.
- If you can find the tooth, gently rinse the tooth under water and take it to the dentist with the child as soon as possible.

### **What do I do if a permanent tooth is knocked out?**

Time is critical! The child must be taken to the dentist immediately. The tooth may be able to be saved and put back in the mouth if the child can make it to the dentist within an hour.

Some things to do to help save the tooth:

- If the tooth is found, but is dirty, gently rinse it under tap water – DO NOT CLEAN OR SCRUB THE TOOTH.
- Hold the tooth by the crown (top part of the tooth) and gently work it back into the tooth socket.
- You or your child should hold the tooth in the socket, while being taken to the dentist.
- If you cannot place the tooth in the socket:
- Place the tooth in a glass of milk or saline, if available.
- If this is not possible, have the child hold the tooth between their gums and cheek while being taken to the dentist. If the child is unable to hold the tooth in their mouth, place the tooth in plastic wrap, glass of water or a wet towel.