

GRIN AND WEAR IT®



A Mouthguard Awareness Initiative



Supported by:



MASSACHUSETTS
MEDICAL SOCIETY

American Academy of Pediatrics
DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



The Massachusetts Chapter

A bright future begins with a healthy smile



We can help you avoid putting a lot of money where your mouth is.

The Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS) has enlisted the help of our member dentists across the state to promote the importance of wearing mouthguards during contact sports.

For more information:

- Contact your dentist to obtain a custom-made mouthguard
- Visit the Oral Health Topics section of [massdental.org](https://www.massdental.org)
- Call the MDS at **800.342.8747**

Grin and Wear It®



Playing sports is often about winning and losing. But losing should not include your teeth.

Grin and Wear It® is an awareness initiative presented by the Massachusetts Dental Society (MDS), the Massachusetts Medical Society (MMS), and the Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (MCAAP) that educates parents, coaches, and children on the importance of wearing mouthguards while playing contact sports.

Just as helmets, shoulder pads, and knee pads are worn to protect against sports-related injuries, mouthguards—also called mouth protectors—are an equally important piece of protective gear.

The MDS, MMS, and MCAAP want players, parents, and coaches to recognize that mouthguards are an easy way to protect an athlete's smile from serious injury . . . so just **Grin and Wear It®!**

Why Wear Mouthguards?

As the name suggests, mouthguards help prevent injury to the mouth area, especially to the teeth, lips, cheeks, and tongue. Even athletes who use helmets or face masks should wear mouthguards, since they also protect against head-and-neck injuries by cushioning blows.

The MDS, MMS, and MCAAP recommend that adults and children wear mouthguards during all sports in which injury to the mouth may occur.





What Types of Mouthguards Are Available?

There are three different kinds of mouthguards. Each one is different in terms of comfort, fit, protection, and cost.

Custom-Made Mouthguard

This type of mouthguard is by far the best in terms of fit, comfort, and protection. It is made by a dental lab from a dentist's impression of the teeth. By pressure-laminating the mouthguard during its fabrication, the final product is designed to fit the athlete's mouth exactly.

Boil-and-Bite Mouthguard

Available at most sporting goods stores, the boil-and-bite mouthguard is a mouth-formed protector that is usually softened by immersing it in hot water. It is then shaped to the teeth by using finger, tongue, and biting pressure. This type of mouthguard may not fit as well as the custom-made version.

Stock Mouthguard

The stock, or ready-made, mouthguard also can be found at most sporting goods stores. It comes in several shapes and is constructed of rubber or polyvinyl material. However, because little can be done to adjust its fit, this type of mouthguard may be uncomfortable and can interfere with breathing and speaking.

Be sure to consult with your dentist to determine which mouthguard is best for you; however, because they offer the best protection and are considered the most comfortable to wear, the MDS recommends that athletes wear custom-made mouthguards when participating in contact sports.

Did You Know?

- More than 5 million teeth are knocked out each year through sports injury, accident, or play.
- Athletes are 60 times more likely to suffer damage to the mouth when not wearing a mouthguard.
- Mouthguard use prevents approximately 200,000 orofacial injuries each year.
- The cost to repair a knocked-out tooth and follow-up dental treatment can cost thousands of dollars—many times greater than the price of a mouthguard.



Orthodontic Patients

A properly fitted mouthguard is especially important for those athletes who wear braces or have fixed bridge work. A blow to the face could damage the brackets or other fixed orthodontic appliances. A mouthguard also provides a barrier between the braces and your cheek or lips, limiting the risk of soft-tissue injuries.

Although mouthguards typically cover only the upper teeth, your dentist or orthodontist may recommend that you wear a mouthguard on your bottom teeth if you have braces on your lower teeth.

And, remember, do not wear a retainer or other removable appliances while participating in any contact sports.





Caring for Your Mouthguard

Like other sports equipment, mouthguards can wear out, deteriorate, or become lost over time. After each use, clean the mouthguard in cool, soapy water and rinse it thoroughly.

Check the condition of the mouthguard from time to time to see if it needs replacement. Tears and perforations can irritate the teeth and mouth tissues. These conditions also diminish the amount of protection the mouthguard can provide on the playing field.

As athletes grow, changes in tooth position and jaw size will also require changes in the mouthguard. Be sure to visit your dentist regularly to have the fit of your mouthguard checked.

No matter what age you are, mouthguards are cost effective, easily obtained, and can go a long way in preventing serious injury to the head and mouth. For this reason, no person engaged in any contact sport should be without one.

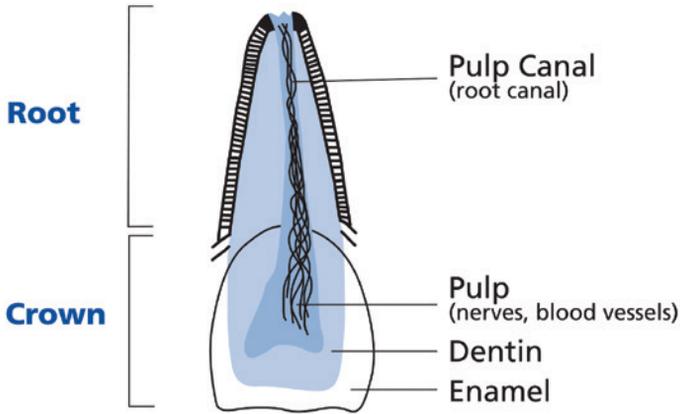




The Massachusetts Dental Society's Infection Control Guidelines for Handling Mouthguards

1. All athletes are encouraged to wear mouthguards during any contact sport in which injury to the teeth, mouth, jaw, or head may occur.
2. It is recommended that athletes minimize removing and handling their mouthguards.
3. Parents and coaches are encouraged to instruct athletes to keep mouthguards in their mouths during practice and games.
4. Athletes should not remove their mouthguards while on the court, the rink, or the field.
5. During short breaks and timeouts, athletes are advised to keep their mouthguards in their mouth.
6. When athletes do remove their mouthguards during longer breaks, such as during halftime, mouthguards should be stored in a container or plastic wrap. If hand contact with the mouthguard occurs, it is recommended that athletes rinse the mouthguard with water (e.g., water bottles) and wash their hands.

What To Do for a Knocked-Out Tooth



In the event that a tooth is knocked out, saving that tooth depends entirely on what is done within the next 30 to 60 minutes.

1. Do not handle the tooth by the root.
2. Do not brush or scrub the tooth. If debris is on the tooth, gently rinse with water.
3. If possible, replant the tooth by biting down gently on a towel or handkerchief. If unable to replant it, place the tooth in cold milk, water, or wrap the tooth in a soaked gauze. It's critical not to let the tooth dry out.
4. Now get to your dentist immediately. Reimplantation within 30 minutes has the best rate of success. Be sure to always have your dentist's office number or emergency number handy.



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