

From the desk of

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Teeth and Sports: The best mouthguard for your child

It's that time of year! The start of school also means the start of sports for many children and back-to-school shopping includes back-to-sports shopping! As you check your lists, don't forget to add a sports mouthguard. Mouthguards are an important part of your sports gear, especially for contact sports like football.

Factors that affect your choice of mouthguard are the amount of contact, the age of your child and the development of their teeth, and whether they have braces or not.

For football, lacrosse, and other high contact sports, you want to be sure that the guard covers both the upper and lower teeth well. For low contact sports, you may choose a guard that only covers the upper teeth.

For younger children, i.e. those with a mix of permanent and baby teeth, mouthguards will likely not fit as tightly, due to the shape of the baby teeth and spaces where baby teeth have fallen out and the permanent teeth haven't grown in yet. In this age group, you may have to try a variety of guards before you find one that feels comfortable and stays in well.

Wearing braces does not exempt an athlete from wearing a mouthguard! The most important consideration is to purchase a guard that does not require boiling. If you use a boil and fit guard with braces you will likely get the guard stuck in the braces! Look for options that say "will work with braces." Most mouthguards can be purchased

over-the-counter, but your orthodontist may also offer custom mouthguards.

A final feature to look for is the manufacturer's dental insurance coverage. This is basically a guarantee that the guard will work, or they will pay for the dental work required. Be sure to read the fine print!

With just a little effort and not much money, wearing a mouthguard can help prevent emergencies like broken or knocked out teeth! But, in case of a sports emergency, be sure to immediately check your child's mouth for damage. If you notice any loose or broken teeth, contact your dentist right away. If a tooth has been knocked out, gently rinse any dirt off the tooth (don't scrub it!), and put it back in place. If you aren't sure where it goes, place it in "Save-A-Tooth" solution or milk and call your dentist ASAP! A tooth can usually be saved if it goes back in place within 30 minutes. If the child has braces, be sure to contact your orthodontist as well.

The following is a list of available mouthguards for each situation:

Football and other high contact sports without braces: Everlast Evershield Double Mouthguard
<https://www.academy.com/shop/pdp/everlast®-adults-evershield-double-mouth-guard?sku=red>

Football and other high contact sports with braces: Shock Doctor Double Braces Fit Mouthguard
<https://www.dickssportinggoods.com/p/shock-doctor-youth-double-braces-fit-mouthguard-16skrydblbrcsstrpspm/16skrydblbrcsstrpspm>

Wrestling, soccer, basketball, and other contact sports without braces: Gameon Mouthguard or SISU Mouthguard
<https://gameonmouthguards.com>

<https://www.dickssportinggoods.com/p/sisu-adult-mouthguard-16ckeass16mthgrdswrs/16ckeass16mthgrdswrs>

Wrestling, soccer, basketball, and other contact sports with braces:

<https://www.shockdoctor.com/products/braces-mouthguard?variant=14354235228213>