



DENTAL HEALTH TIP

Accidents happen.
Prepare for the unexpected—wear
a mouthguard to protect your teeth!

Protect your smile

When it comes to oral protection, mouthguards are an essential piece of athletic gear. Mouthguards help to buffer impacts to the mouth and minimize the risk of broken teeth or oral injuries to the teeth, lips, cheeks and tongue. Many experts recommend that a mouthguard be worn for any recreational activity—not just contact sports that pose higher risk of injury to the mouth.

There are three basic types of mouthguards:

- **Stock mouthguards** come pre-formed, ready to use, are the least expensive, but aren't particularly comfortable and do not have a custom fit.
- **Boil and bite mouthguards** are made from a plastic material that is dipped or soaked in boiling water to soften. When the guard is placed in the mouth and bitten into, it molds to the teeth shape for a semi-custom fit.
- **Custom mouthguards** protect teeth the best and are made by your dentist from molds of your own teeth. They are the most secure and comfortable since they are form-fitted individually.

Caring for your mouthguard

Store your mouthguard in a hard-shell container, avoiding extreme heat to prevent distortion. Rinse before and after use, and clean occasionally with soap or toothpaste. Check for wear and replace the mouthguard if damaged.

Ask your dentist

Talk to your dentist about selecting a mouthguard that will provide the right protection. Although most mouthguards only cover the upper teeth, your dentist may suggest that you use a mouthguard on the lower teeth if you have braces.