



# Smilematters

## PATIENT FACT SHEET

### Spring into a Healthy Body/Healthy Mouth!

Warm weather is arriving, and with it comes an increase in outdoor sports and activities. Being active is a good thing to do for a healthy body – make sure your mouth is ready for the action!

#### Wear a Mouthguard

The most-injured area of the body during contact sports is the mouth. Dental injuries can be permanent, painful and costly. The good news is that injuries can be prevented or minimized by wearing a mouthguard which covers the upper teeth and helps prevent injuries to the teeth, lips, cheeks, tongue and jaw. Of course, the helmet or headgear required for the sport or activity should also be worn as it protects against injuries to the head and neck.

There are three kinds of mouthguards available. Make sure you talk to your dentist about the right one for you:

**Stock or ready-made mouthguards.** These are the least-expensive mouthguards, found at most sports stores. They are pre-formed and ready to wear, often don't fit very well, and may make it difficult to breathe and speak. They may also be bulky, loose or uncomfortable.

**Boil-and-bite.** Found at most sporting goods stores, these may offer a better fit than stock, and are molded to fit your mouth by boiling the mouthguard in water and then biting into the warm plastic.

**Custom-fitted.** These mouthguards are individually designed and constructed for you by your dentist. They're a bit more expensive, but are more comfortable and do not interfere with speech or breathing.

Rinse your mouthguard under cold water after each use and occasionally clean it with soap and cool water. Like other sports gear, mouthguards can tear or wear out, so it should be replaced after each sports season.

#### Handling Dental Injuries

Of course, dental emergencies can still happen. Here are some simple tips for you to follow if you are faced with one of the more common dental emergencies. Keep this list and the emergency kit items below in your sports bag!

#### If a Tooth is Knocked Out:

- Immediately call your dentist for an emergency appointment.

- Hold the tooth by the crown, not the root, and gently rinse with water if it is dirty. Do not scrub or remove any attached tissue fragments.

- If possible, gently insert and hold the tooth in it socket or in your mouth between the cheek and gum to keep it moist. Otherwise, put the tooth in a cup of milk and get the dentist immediately. Remember to take the tooth with you!

#### Broken Tooth:

- Rinse your mouth with warm water.
- Use an ice pack or cold compress to keep any swelling down.
- Use ibuprofen, not aspirin, for pain. Aspirin is an anti-coagulant, which may cause excessive bleeding in a dental emergency.
- Immediately go to your dentist.

#### Broken Jaw:

- Apply cold compresses to control swelling.
- Go to your dentist or a hospital emergency room immediately.

#### Gums or Tissues are Injured:

Injuries to the inside of the mouth such as tears, puncture wounds or cuts to the cheek, lips or tongue should be cleaned right away with warm water. Go to the emergency room if severe.

#### Bitten Lip or Tongue:

- Clean the area gently with a cloth and apply a cold compress to reduce swelling. If the bleeding doesn't stop, go to a hospital emergency room immediately.
- Bleeding from a cut tongue can be reduced by pulling the tongue forward and using gauze to place pressure on the wound.

#### Emergency Tool Kit:

- Dentist's phone numbers (office and an emergency home or cell number)
- Saline solution
- A clean handkerchief
- Gauze
- Small container with lid
- Ibuprofen

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