



# BAILEY FAMILY DENTAL & BRACES

“HELPING PEOPLE THROUGH DENTISTRY”



## Mouthguards

In every season, thousands of people of all ages participate in organized sports. As the weather gets nicer and the days grow longer, it seems more people find themselves playing in a softball league or taking part in a pick-up game of soccer.

Most people think of the essentials in playing the sport before they get started. Softball, for instance, requires a glove, a bat, and cleats. However, many people forget a piece of equipment that can both protect them and save them thousands of dollars at the same time . . . a mouthguard.

Mouthguards may be both the most forgotten piece of sporting equipment and the most important. Most people think

mouthguards are only needed in contact sports like hockey or football. However, dento-alveolar injuries (injuries to teeth and supporting structures) happen more commonly in non-contact sports such as basketball, baseball, bicycling, and soccer. With the use of mouthguards in contact sports, the prevalence of oral trauma has been reduced from 50% to nearly 1%. In limited-contact sports, however, the prevalence of such injuries ranges between 14% and 34%, showing the necessity of mouthguard use for limited-contact or even non-contact sports. An average dento-alveolar injury can cost anywhere from a few hundred to a few thousand dollars. With this in mind, a store-bought mouthguard is approximately \$10-\$25, and a custom-made mouthguard from your dentist may cost up to a few hundred dollars, but the overall savings in preventing injury is very much worth it.

Since children are the most likely to participate in organized sports, it makes sense that they are also the most likely to suffer from a dento-alveolar injury while participating in a sport. In fact, the age group most likely to suffer from such an injury is between the ages of 7-11 years old. It is very important to provide athletes of this age group with an appropriate mouthguard,

both to protect their teeth and get them used to wearing mouthguards during sporting activities.

Mouthguards should be treated equally as important as any other piece of sporting equipment. The question that follows is, how do I pick an appropriate one? The best option would be to get a professionally-made mouthguard from your local dentist due to the fact that these are going to have the best fit, appropriate design, and will be made of the most effective impact-absorbing material. The next best option would be the “boil and bite” (\$10-\$25). They still have an adequate fit and still provide good protection. The last option, and the least expensive, would be the pre-molded mouthguard purely for the fact that they do not fit very well and tend to fall out of an athletes’ mouth. For these reasons, they do not provide very reliable protection. Just remember, any mouthguard is better than no mouthguard.

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**Any questions,  
visit our Website at  
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## National Children's Dental Health Month

Each February the American Dental Association encourages dental professionals, teachers, parents, and others to take part in National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM). The main goal of NCDHM is to increase awareness of the importance of good oral health for children.

Often the significance of instilling good oral health habits in children at a young age is overlooked. The healthy development of the adult

dentition is closely related to the health of a child's "baby teeth." Also, as with any other learned habit, the sooner good oral health habits are taught, the more likely they will remain throughout life! I would go so far as to say that teaching a child appropriate health care techniques is as important as potty training... And less messy! This, of course, starts with educating not only children, but parents, teachers, and caretakers as well, since proper oral care is commonly something that children require help with. So, here are a few basics when it comes to taking care of teeth:

1. Everyone should brush two times a day for two minutes.
2. It is important to oversee your children as they brush to be sure they are doing a thorough enough job.
3. Make brushing fun! There are many types of mouthwashes that can be used before brushing that will color the plaque on the tooth surface so that the child can see where all the plaque, or what I like to call "sugar bugs," are and this makes cleaning the teeth a lot more enjoyable when they can see the results.

4. Lead by example. If your children see you brushing and flossing regularly, they, of course, will be more likely to do it themselves.
5. Implement flossing techniques early, and consider using "easy flossers." These will make flossing much easier for children, and they do a fairly decent job at cleaning between the teeth, certainly much better than nothing at all.

Remember, attitudes and habits established at an early age are critical in maintaining good oral health for life. It is important for not only those on the dental team but teachers, caretakers, and parents to take part in helping children improve their oral health habits to keep a healthy smile for life!

*Resource: ADA presents NCDHM Program Planning Guide*

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