

## **Oral Injury Prevention-Mouthguards**

- A mouthguard is a horseshoe-shaped, soft plastic device used to protect the teeth, lips, gums and cheeks from injuries that can occur when playing many different sports.
- A recent survey of Illinois high school interscholastic coaches revealed that mouth injuries (cut lips or broken teeth) are fairly common and that more than half of the athletes do not wear mouthguards.
- Mouthguards have been found to prevent more than 200,000 mouth injuries a year in high school and college football.
- Several studies suggest that mouthguards reduce the number of concussions by decreasing the force of injuries.
- There are three types of mouthguards:

Stock - ready to wear

Mouth formed - boil first and then bite to fit

Custom made - made by a dental professional from an impression made of your teeth

- Mouthguards can range in price from \$1 to \$100. The money saved from avoiding costly injuries to your mouth is well worth the investment.
- After using a mouthguard, it should be rinsed with water and stored in a rigid container with holes in it to allow the mouthguard to dry. Mouthguards can last for more than one season when cared for properly.
- The American Dental Association and other sports dentistry groups recommend the use of mouthguards in all organized team sports where a mouth injury can occur. This includes football, soccer, baseball, softball, basketball, volleyball and wrestling.

### **For more information, contact**

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NOTE: This fact sheet was derived from one previously published by the Arizona Department of Health Services.