

Dental Injury in South Carolina: A Fact Sheet

Mouthguards

Injuries to the teeth and mouth may be preventable by proper use of a mouthguard in all situations where impact damage is likely. Some of the injuries preventable by consistent use of a mouthguard include the following:

- dislodged or knocked out teeth
- broken or chipped teeth
- bitten or lacerated tongue or lip
- objects caught between the teeth
- jaw fracture
- neck injury
- jaw collision (the upper jaw gets jammed into the lower jaw)¹

Dental injury in South Carolina:

- ✓ Approximately 1 out of every 200 South Carolinians receives a dental injury requiring medical treatment, each year.
- ✓ More than 50% of all dental injuries are caused by motor vehicle accidents.
- ✓ About 15% of all dental injuries are caused by sports and recreation accidents.

What Is A Mouthguard?

A mouthguard is a molded piece of plastic that protects teeth (upper teeth, lower teeth, or both sets) from injury due to impact. They come in many shapes, sizes, and colors. They can be custom-made by a dentist or bought at most sporting equipment stores.

Sports for which you may need a mouthguard:

If you participate in these or other sports, consult your dentist about getting a mouthguard.

- Acrobatics
- Baseball
- Basketball
- Bicycling
- Boxing
- Equestrian events
- Extreme sports
- Field events
- Field hockey
- Football
- Gymnastics
- Handball
- Ice hockey
- Inline skating
- Lacrosse
- Martial arts
- Racquetball
- Rugby
- Shotputting
- Skateboarding
- Skiing
- Skydiving
- Soccer
- Softball
- Squash
- Surfing
- Volleyball
- Water polo
- Weightlifting
- Wrestling

Types of mouthguard:

- ✓ Boil-and-bite: these are made of a plastic that becomes soft when boiled. The wearer bites down on them in soft form, thus molding the plastic to the individual mouth.
- ✓ Stock: these are pre-formed and intended to be one-size-fits-all.
- ✓ Orthodontic treatment guards: these can be obtained from an orthodontist. They are made loose-fitting so that they can protect orthodontic appliances as well as prevent harm to the teeth.
- ✓ Custom fit: most dentists and orthodontists can help mold a custom mouthguard.²

Car Safety

Many injuries to the mouth and teeth can be prevented by proper restraint during a motor vehicle accident. Seat belts and child safety seats will help prevent passengers and drivers from impacting the steering wheel, dashboard, or front seats reducing damage to the face and head.

Under South Carolina State Law:



- ✓ Since July 4, 2001, all children under age six must be restrained in a safety seat when riding in a vehicle.
 - Only about 15% of South Carolina residents use child safety seats correctly!
- ✓ Since December 9, 2005, all passengers in a vehicle must wear a safety belt at all times, and can be ticketed for failing to do so.
 - Wearing a safety belt reduces the risk of death or injury in an accident by about 50%.

Child Passenger Safety Program

The Child Passenger Safety Program is administered by the SC Department of Public Safety, with funds provided by the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration. The program began in 1995. Its goal is to prevent and reduce injuries to children due to motor vehicle accidents. This goal is accomplished through the following activities:

- Instructing parents in the proper installation of the various child safety seats (infant, convertible, and booster seats), and assisting with installation when necessary.
- Providing technical assistance as needed.
- Teaching parents and caregivers about the importance of safe transportation for children riding in motor vehicles.³

For further information on mouthguards:

http://www.gssiweb.com/reflib/refs/68/alt_000000020000038f.pdf?CFID=4519349&CFTOKEN=44684274
<http://www.qualitydentistry.com/dental/sdentistry/mouth.html>

For further information on South Carolina motor vehicle restraint laws:

http://www.buckleupsc.com/seat_belt_fact_sheet.asp
<http://www.scdps.org/> (South Carolina Department of Public Safety)
<http://www.scdps.org/ohs/2004fb/Part%20V%202004%20FactBook.pdf>

For more information, contact:
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