

April is National Facial Protection Month

Five Tips to Prevent Facial Injuries with Simple Sports Safety Precautions

Rosemont, IL (April 2014) – Five of the nation’s top dental associations want to remind young athletes to play it safe by wearing a mouth guard during recreational and organized sports this spring. Research estimates that about 2 percent of all children or adolescents who participate in sports eventually will suffer a facial injury severe enough to require medical attention¹.

"A properly fitted mouth guard is an essential piece of any athlete's protective equipment," says Dr. Paul Nativi, DMD, FASD, and past president of the Academy for Sports Dentistry. "Mouth guards protect the teeth from being knocked out, broken and displaced. Mouth guards prevent injuries to the bone and tissues around the teeth. They also help prevent injuries to the mandible (lower jaw) and temporomandibular joint in the jaw. Tooth loss incurs a tremendous financial, emotional, and psychological expense. Protect what you have - wear a properly fitted mouth guard."

The Academy for Sports Dentistry (ASD), American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD), American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS), American Association of Orthodontists (AAO), and the American Dental Association (ADA) are collaborating to promote National Facial Protection Month in April. National Facial Protection Month strives to raise public awareness and remind parents/caregivers, coaches and athletes to play it safe while playing sports.

According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry’s Policy on Prevention of Sports-related Orofacial Injuries, sports accidents reportedly account for 10 to 39 of all dental injuries in children and are most often caused by direct hits with a hard object, such as a puck or ball, and player-to-player contact².

The dental associations offer the following five tips to help prevent facial injury:

1. **Wear a mouth guard when playing contact sports:** Mouth guards are significantly less expensive than the cost to repair an injury, and dentists and dental specialists can make customized mouth guards that hold teeth in place and allow for normal speech and breathing.
2. **Wear a helmet:** Helmets absorb the energy of an impact and help prevent damage to the head.
3. **Wear protective eyewear:** Eyes are extremely vulnerable to damage, especially when playing sports.
4. **Wear a face shield to avoid scratched or bruised skin:** Hockey pucks, basketballs and racquetballs can cause severe facial damage at any age.
5. **Make protective gear mandatory for all sports:** Athletes who participate in football, hockey and boxing are required to wear mouth guards. If mouth guards have been proven to significantly decrease the risk of oral injuries, why is it not mandatory in every sport for kids to be required to wear them, particularly when participating in³:

¹ http://www.encyclopedia.com/topic/Maxillofacial_Trauma.aspx.

² SOURCE: Newsome P, Tran D, Cooke M. The role of the mouth-guard in the prevention of sports-related dental injuries: A review. Int J Paediatr Dent 2001;11(6):396-404.

³ Chart provided by the American Dental Association and the Academy of Sports Dentistry.

Acrobatics	Field Hockey	Racquetball	Squash
Bandy	Football	Rugby	Surfing
Baseball	Gymnastics	Shot Put	Volleyball
Basketball	Handball	Skateboarding	Water Polo
Bicycling	Ice Hockey	Skiing	Weightlifting
Boxing	Inline Skating	Skydiving	Wrestling
Equestrian Events	Lacrosse	Soccer	
Field Events	Martial Arts	Softball	

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About National Facial Protection Month

National Facial Protection Month is sponsored annually during the month of April by the Academy for Sports Dentistry (<http://www.academyforsportsdentistry.org/>), American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (www.aapd.org), American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (www.aaoms.org), American Association of Orthodontists (www.mylifemysmile.org), and the American Dental Association (www.mouthhealthy.org).

About the Academy for Sports Dentistry

The Academy for Sports Dentistry was founded in 1983 as a forum for dentists, physicians, trainers, coaches, dental technicians, and educators interested in exchanging ideas related to sports dentistry and the dental needs of athletes at risk to sports' injuries. The Academy is an organization dedicated to health and fitness through education, service and research pertaining to the prevention and treatment of sports-related orofacial injuries and diseases. Activities include the collection and dissemination of information on dental athletic injuries and the encouragement of research on the prevention of dental injuries to athletes. This organization exists to promote the advancement of research pertaining to sports dentistry; the utilization of this knowledge for the promotion of better approaches to the prevention and the treatment of athletic injuries and oral disease; and the improvement of communication and cooperation among all members of the health care community in order to share and utilize this knowledge for the benefit of the people. For more information, visit the Academy Web site at <http://www.academyforsportsdentistry.org/>.

About the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD) is the recognized authority on children's oral health. As advocates for children's oral health, the AAPD promotes evidence-based policies and clinical guidelines; educates and informs policymakers, parents and guardians, and other health care professionals; fosters research; and provides continuing professional education for pediatric dentists and general dentists who treat children. Founded in 1947, the AAPD is a not-for-profit professional membership association representing the specialty of pediatric dentistry. Its 9,000 members provide primary care and comprehensive dental specialty treatments for infants, children, adolescents and individuals with special health care needs. For further information, please visit the AAPD Web site at <http://www.aapd.org> or the AAPD's consumer Web site at <http://www.mychildrensteeth.org>.

About the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons

The experts in face, mouth and jaw surgery™ — The American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS) is the professional organization representing more than 10,000 oral and maxillofacial surgeons, OMS residents and professional allied staff in the United States. AAOMS supports its fellows' and members' ability to practice their specialty through education, research and advocacy. AAOMS fellows and members comply with rigorous continuing education requirements and submit to periodic office anesthesia evaluations. For additional information about oral and maxillofacial surgery, visit the AAOMS Web site at MyOMS.org.

About the American Association of Orthodontists

Founded in 1900, the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) is the world’s oldest and largest dental specialty organization. It represents 17,000 orthodontist members throughout the United States, Canada and abroad. The AAO encourages and sponsors key research to enable its members to provide the highest quality of care to patients, and is committed to educating the public about the need for, and benefits of, orthodontic treatment.

Orthodontists are uniquely qualified specialists who diagnose, prevent and treat dental and facial irregularities to correctly align teeth and jaws. Orthodontists receive an additional two to three years of specialized education in orthodontics beyond dental school at an accredited orthodontic residency program. For more information, visit mylifemysmile.org

About the American Dental Association

The not-for-profit ADA is the nation's largest dental association, representing 157,000 dentist members. The premier source of oral health information, the ADA has advocated for the public's health and promoted the art and science of dentistry since 1859. The ADA's state-of-the-art research facilities develop and test dental products and materials that have advanced the practice of dentistry and made the patient experience more positive. The ADA Seal of Acceptance long has been a valuable and respected guide to consumer dental care products. The monthly The Journal of the American Dental Association (JADA) is the ADA's flagship publication and the best-read scientific journal in dentistry. For more information about the ADA, visit ada.org. For more information on oral health, including prevention, care and treatment of dental disease, visit the ADA’s consumer Web site MouthHealthy.org.

Media Contacts:

<p>Pam Paladin Marketing and Member/Consumer Relations Manager American Association of Orthodontists (314) 993-1700, ext. 524 ppaladin@aaortho.org</p>	<p>Janie Dunham Editorial Manager American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (847) 678-6200 jdunham@aaoms.org</p>	<p>Erika Hoeft Public Relations Senior Manager American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (312) 337-2169, ext. 27 erika@aapd.org</p>	<p>Shelly Lott Executive Secretary Academy for Sports Dentistry (217) 227-3431 sportsdentistry@consolidated.net</p>
<p>Lydia Hall Manager, Media Relations American Dental Association (312) 440-2806 halll@ada.org</p>			