Fact Sheet
Protect Your Smile: Using a Mouthguard in Sports

What are mouthguards?

They are U–shaped, plastic devices that fit over the upper teeth when playing certain sports. Some have straps that attach to helmets. They act like shock absorbers to cushion blows to the mouth and other parts of the head. They are protective mouthpieces that can be taken in and out of the mouth quickly and are easily cleaned.

Why are mouthguards used?

They prevent injuries to the teeth, lips, checks, tongue and jaw.
They help minimize concussions.
Nationally, over 200,000 oral and facial injuries are prevented in high school and college football when faceguards and mouthguards are worn. The cost to treat just one injured tooth can be more than $1,000.

Who should use mouthguards?

Anyone who plays sports or is involved in physical activities that could result in injuries to the face, mouth and head.
Downhill ski racers use mouthguards!

How do injuries happen in sports?

Body to body contact
Falls
A direct hit by any sports equipment

Are mouthguards required sports equipment in Maine schools?

Maine law only requires mouthguard to be used for football, ice hockey and field hockey. Mouthguards are encouraged but not required for basketball, baseball, lacrosse, and soccer. Dentists have reported a number of injuries to basketball players. Sports rules for elementary schools and recreational leagues are regulated by local boards, sponsoring agencies, and other groups.

Where can I get a mouthguard? How much does one cost?

You can purchase one at a department stores, drug stores, and most athletic stores for under $5.00. A dentist can make a custom fitted mouthguard, which can cost $40.00 or more.

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention
An Office of the Department of Health and Human Services
John E. Baldacci, Governor Brenda M. Harvey, Commissioner

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For more information, contact your dentist or:
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286 Water St, 5th Floor
Augusta ME 04330
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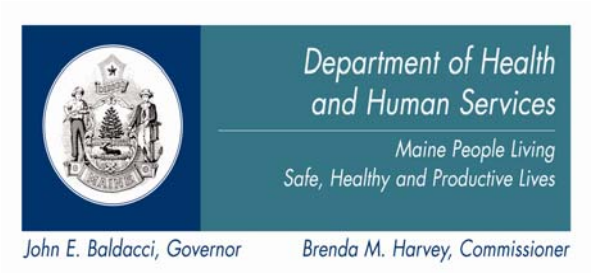

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