



SPORTS MOUTHGUARD - CDHA POSITION STATEMENT UPDATE

Sports Mouthguard - Putting More Bite into Injury Prevention



On September 28, 2012, the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) Board of Directors endorsed the 2012 Position Statement — *Putting More Bite into Injury Prevention*. This position statement was based on the 2005 CDHA Position Paper on Sports Mouthguards: *Putting More Bite into Injury Prevention*.

Research shows that orofacial injury in sport is prevalent and carries significant medical, financial, cognitive, psychological and social costs. Research also confirms that mouthguards can prevent orofacial injuries. CDHA therefore strongly recommends that dental hygienists play an integral role in the prevention of orofacial injury in sports and that dental hygienists promote properly fitted mouthguards as an essential piece of protective equipment in sports that present a risk of orofacial injury at the recreational and competitive level, in both practices and games.

BACKGROUND

The following describes the process that CDHA used when updating the Sports Mouthguards position statement.

In 2005, CDHA published a Position Paper on Sports Mouthguards: *Putting More Bite into Injury Prevention* and a corresponding CDHA Position Statement, which was based upon the evidence in the position paper. In 2012, CDHA undertook a review of the 2005 position statement by examining recent position statements and publications from the following organizations and groups. This information suggested that the 2005 position statement remains relevant.

American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry¹

American Dental Association²

American Dental Hygienists Association³

American Public Health Association⁴

Academy of General Dentistry⁵

Academy for Sports Dentistry⁶

Australian Football Academy⁷

British Dental Association⁸

Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine⁹

Canadian Dental Association¹⁰

FDI World Dental Association¹¹

United States Department of Health and Human Services¹²

RECOMMENDATIONS

Dental hygienists can:

- Work together with other health professionals to deliver health education, injury prevention, and mouthguard promotion campaigns on either a one-to-one basis or to groups of clients, parents, athletes, athletic teams, sports coaches and officials, and gym teachers;
- Act as change agents to influence a culture in sports that accepts use of mouthguards as a normal part of dressing for sport;
- Fabricate mouthguards and advise on the use and care of properly fitted mouthguards, and
- Conduct research on the oral health promotion of mouthguards and the prevention of injury.

Sports governing bodies, local injury prevention centres, and school districts can:

- Mandate the use of properly fitted mouthguards during practices and competition in all sports where orofacial injury is a risk (i.e., hockey, ringette, basketball, baseball, soccer)
- Develop a plan to address compliance in sports that mandate mouthguards, and
- Deliver increased health promotion and education of athletic trainers, coaches, sports officials, organizers, administrators, athletes, and parents.

Dental hygiene professional organizations and educational institutions can:

- Work with national sports and school organizations to develop an approach for expanding mouthguard regulations in sports and for addressing compliance issues in sports that have existing mouthguard rules, and





- Provide ongoing opportunities during college/university and in continuing professional development to gain knowledge and experience with mouthguard issues.

Governments can:

- Fund health promotion and injury prevention programs that include mouthguards;
- Work with local or provincial injury prevention centres to establish an Injury Prevention Centre of Canada (IPCC) that would be responsible for an injury surveillance system, for monitoring injury exposure and incidence, and for assessing injury trends in activities when new equipment or regulations are introduced, and
- Establish an injury research and demonstration fund to test and evaluate injury prevention and control approaches.



Health insurance industry can:

- Consider covering the cost of properly fitted mouthguards in health plans and promote the use of custom fabricated mouthguards.



Researchers can:

- Conduct high quality mouthguard research, including randomized controlled trials on topics such as:
 - Efficacy of various types of mouthguards in preventing orofacial injuries and concussion;
 - Cost effectiveness of mouthguards and infection control;
 - Effectiveness of population based interventions and sports regulations, including an increased penalty severity for mouthguard rule infractions, for increasing mouthguard use;
- Survey dental hygienists and other oral health professionals to determine the general knowledge and experience levels with respect to mouthguards and to determine attitudes of dental hygienists with respect to advocating for use of mouthguards, and
- Improved product design of an effective, comfortable mouthguard that would facilitate widespread compliance.

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