



THE CANADIAN DENTAL
HYGIENISTS ASSOCIATION
L'ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE
DES HYGIÉNISTES DENTAIRES



For immediate release (Disponible en français sur la demande)

Media Release

Putting More Bite into Injury Prevention

Dental Hygienists Prompt Athletes to Wear Protective Mouthguards

April 25, 2013 (Ottawa, ON) – Today, the Canadian Dental Hygienists Association (CDHA) is officially launching a public awareness campaign to encourage the use of sports mouthguards. The CDHA board of directors recently endorsed the 2012 position statement — 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.^{1,2}

“CDHA strongly believes that dental hygienists play an integral role in the prevention of orofacial injury in sports,” said Sandy Lawlor, CDHA president. “Dental hygienists remain committed to promoting 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.”

A sports mouthguard is a removable dental appliance that fits over the upper teeth and gums. It acts as a shock absorber so that the force is distributed and absorbed throughout the appliance if you experience a direct blow to the jaw or teeth². More specifically, sports mouthguards:

1. Protect the teeth, gums and jaws in sports related injuries resulting from a blow to the face;
2. Prevent the loss or fracture of teeth in sports such as baseball, where equipment can come in contact with a player’s mouth and teeth; and
3. Protect top and bottom teeth from severe clenching which may cause fractures, excessive wear or injury.

According to a 2007 study that evaluated the effectiveness of sports mouthguards, the overall injury risk was found to be 1.5 to 2 times greater when a sports mouthguard was not worn during athletic activity¹.

It has been estimated that the cost of this preventable injury is between \$22-25 million per year. A 2005 report estimated the cost to treat a lost front tooth over a lifetime was between \$5,000 and \$20,000¹.

“Wearing a sports mouthguard is indeed a cost effective investment in protection,” added Lawlor. “The average cost of a custom fitted sports mouthguard can be as low as \$50. The cost of hockey skates and other sports equipment can far exceed that.”

CDHA is committed to working together with decision makers, sports organizations and other key stakeholders across the country to promote and include the use of properly fitted mouthguards during practices and competition in all sports where orofacial injury is a risk.

“We know that oral health is essential for overall wellness and is an integral part of physical, social, and mental wellbeing,” concluded Lawlor. “Including mouthguards as part of health promotion and injury prevention programs is vital to protecting the overall health and safety of all Canadians”.

Serving the profession since 1963, CDHA is the collective national voice of more than 24,000 registered dental hygienists working in Canada, directly representing 16,500 individual members including dental hygienists and students. Dental hygiene is the 6th largest registered health profession in Canada with professionals working in a variety of settings, including independent practice, with people of all ages, addressing issues related to oral health. For more information, visit: www.cdha.ca/mouthguards .

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References:

1. CDHA Position Paper on Sports Mouthguards *Putting More Bite into Injury Prevention*. November-December 2005, Vol.39,NO.5. http://www.cdha.ca/pdfs/profession/resources/Mouthguard_Position_2005.pdf
2. American Dental Association (ADA). *Statement on Athletic Mouthguards*. February 2009. <http://www.ad.org/1875.aspx>