

# Mouthguard Use & Care



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

- Mouthguards are for recreational, professional, or competitive athletes and should be worn in practices as well as games.
- Initially wear the mouthguard during training or practices in order to adapt to the new feel of the guard in the mouth.
- Do not chew on or alter the mouthguard as this will affect the fit and possibly damage it or decrease its effectiveness.
- Custom-made mouthguards are made for that particular time when the cast of the dentition is taken.
- It may be easier to find a lost mouthguard on the playing field if it is coloured plastic, rather than clear.
- Rinse the mouthguard with cold water or with a mouthrinse before and after each use. Avoid contact with hot water.
- Since the mouth contains bacteria and plaque, it is important to clean your mouthguard after each use. Clean it with toothpaste and a toothbrush or clean it in cool, soapy water and rinse thoroughly.
- Store and transport the mouthguard in a firm, perforated container to prevent damage and permit air circulation. Do not close the mouthguard container until the freshly washed mouthguard is dry.
- Do not share your mouthguard with others.
- Avoid high temperatures or direct sunlight to minimize distortion.
- Check the condition of the mouthguard occasionally and replace it if it has holes or tears, becomes loose, or irritates the teeth or gums.
- Remove retainers and other removable appliances such as orthodontic retainers, removable bridges, or dentures (complete or partial) before inserting the mouthguard.
- If the mouthguard absorbs a strong blow, it may need to be replaced to maintain a proper fit and protection.
- Due to pressure from the teeth, and alternate wetting and drying that occur between uses and during cleaning, mouthguards wear out over time. The material deteriorates and loses resilience, reducing effectiveness. Therefore, they should be replaced every two to three years. Earlier replacement is recommended if they become cracked, torn, and split, or if fit deteriorates, significant wear appears, or there is unsatisfactory retention.
- Bring the mouthguard to each dental hygiene visit to have it evaluated by the dental hygienist.

