

# Protecting your athlete's smile

The mouth is a frequently injured area of the body during contact sports. Research has shown that most mouth injuries occur when athletes are not wearing a mouthguard. Wearing a mouthguard can help prevent broken teeth, cuts on the lips and tongue, and jaw injuries.

It's easy to smile when you feel good. LifeSmile® is a wellness program that's part of your Delta Dental benefits provided by your employer. It's easier to maintain good oral health habits when you have some support. LifeSmile® has the answers to your dental questions and can help keep you smiling for a lifetime.

## What makes a good mouthguard?

- Mouthguards protect the teeth from trauma or loss and reduce the risk for jaw fractures.
- Mouthguards also minimize lacerated and bruised lips and cheeks by keeping these soft tissue areas away from the teeth, and this is especially true for children with braces.
- An effective mouthguard should remain in place during the activity while not interfering with speech or breathing.
- It should provide maximum protection and be comfortable to wear.
- Wearing a mouthguard is highly recommended for those participating in boxing, basketball, baseball, field hockey, football, ice hockey, lacrosse, martial arts, soccer, wrestling, water polo and rugby.
- Participants in recreational activities such as skateboarding and bicycling should also wear mouthguards, especially in competition.

## Which mouthguard is right for your athlete?

- **Stock/ready-made**  
Available in various sizes and shapes, but cannot be adjusted to fit your mouth. Often, they are loose and bulky and may interfere with speaking or breathing.
- **Mouth-formed/boil & bite**  
These plastic mouthguard shells are boiled in water for a few seconds, cooled under tap water and molded directly in the mouth. Compared to custom-made guards, the fit is not as accurate, and it may not last as long.
- **Custom-made**  
This type is highly recommended and the most effective. Dentists make them at the office or order them from a laboratory from a cast of your teeth. Young athletes are more likely to wear a mouthguard that fits comfortably, stays in place and allows for better breathing.

“My dentist gave me a mouthpiece to protect my smile, just like my favorite athletes.”

- Bo, Quarterback

LifeSmile® from Delta Dental can help you prevent disease and keep you and your child on the path toward a healthier, happier life. Healthy smile, Happy life: Take advantage of numerous free resources for improving your oral health at [oralhealth.deltadental.com](https://www.oralhealth.deltadental.com).

