

Watch Your Mouth!

Endodontists Urge Mouth Guard Use In ALL Sports

(NAPSA)—Most people associate knocked-out teeth and traumatic dental injury with rugged physical sports such as football and hockey. The physical contact, aggression and high speeds associated with these sports greatly increase the odds of inflicting a dental injury. However, high-contact athletes are not the only players at risk. In fact, soccer players are approximately eight times more likely to suffer dental injuries than football players, and nearly 20 percent of baseball players will experience a serious dental injury.

An athlete is 60 times more likely to suffer a dental injury such as a knocked-out, or avulsed, tooth when not wearing a protective mouth guard, and the number of sports-related dental injuries is increasing. To protect young athletes' natural teeth, the American Association of Endodontists (AAE) urges all coaches and parents to enforce mouth guard use this season as part of its annual Root Canal Awareness Week. Mouth guards should be worn for all sports, including lacrosse, softball, track and field, and gymnastics.

"Mouth guards are not just for kids who play rough contact sports," says Shepard S. Goldstein, D.M.D., president of the AAE. "It is essential that children be protected from dental injury when they play any physical sport. Mouth guard use is a must for every sport year-round to save kids' teeth."

Mouth guards are available in three common varieties: the stock, or "one-size-fits-all" mouth guard; the mouth-formed "boil-and-bite" mouth guard; and the dentist-made custom mouth guard. Custom mouth guards professionally fitted by a dentist offer the best protection from dental injury, but using any form of mouth guard

If a tooth is knocked out, the AAE recommends the following steps to help save the tooth:

- Pick up the tooth by the chewing surface, not the root.
- If the tooth is dirty, gently rinse with water only.
- Reposition the tooth in the socket, if possible.
- Keep the tooth moist with milk or water, or in the mouth, next to the cheek.
- See an endodontist within 30 minutes.

For more information, visit www.rootcanalspecialists.org.



helps to safeguard natural teeth and reduce the chance of dental trauma. In fact, mouth guards currently prevent about 200,000 injuries a year.

When using a mouth guard, it's important to clean it to prevent any possible infections. Talk to your dentist about proper mouth guard maintenance.

In case a tooth is knocked out or injured while playing a sport, it is critical to consult an endodontist as soon as possible to increase the likelihood of saving the natural tooth. Endodontists are experts in treating traumatic tooth injuries and are specialists in root canal treatment, the procedure often required to repair and save the natural tooth.

"My tooth was knocked out and three others were damaged while I was playing basketball during gym class," says 19-year-old Michael Twist. "Thankfully, I was able to see a specialist who replanted my tooth and saved them with root canals. Now they're as good as new!"

For more information on the importance of mouth guards, or to find a nearby endodontist, visit www.rootcanalspecialists.org.