

# Protecting Our *Children*

## Guard Against Mouth Injuries

(NAPSA)—According to a recent survey by Impulse Research Corp., 27 percent of parents of children between the ages of 8 and 18 who participate in organized sports said their child has sustained an injury during a game that resulted in a trip to the emergency room—but yours don't have to be among them. That's because by taking proactive measures, such as requiring children to wear facial protection and mouth guards, parents and coaches can help prevent injury and keep young athletes in the game.

Yet, the survey found, 67 percent of parents admitted their children do not wear mouth guards during organized sports such as football, baseball, basketball, soccer and lacrosse.

That may be why orthodontists and dentists are seeing so many young patients suffer oral and facial trauma as a result of sports injuries.

The American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) encourages mothers across North America to take the Moms For Mouth Guards pledge that their children will consistently wear mouth guards and other protective gear at competitions and practices.

What's more, by taking the pledge online, parents and coaches can also make a difference in the lives of other young athletes. Each time someone takes the pledge, the AAO will donate a mouth guard to the National Alliance for Youth Sports to help protect the smile of a child.



American Association of Orthodontists



**The Moms For Mouth Guards campaign encourages mothers to make sure their children wear mouth guards and other protective gear while playing sports.**

Injuries to the face and mouth can happen in an instant. "Using a mouth guard is one of the most inexpensive and simple measures parents and coaches can take to help keep their kids safe during sports," said Lee W. Graber, D.D.S., M.S., M.S., Ph.D., president of the AAO. "As experts in helping patients achieve a healthy, beautiful smile, the last thing my colleagues and I want to see is a smile ruined by a preventable injury."

To take the Moms For Mouth Guards pledge and learn more about the importance of mouth guards in youth sports, visit [www.momsformouthguards.org](http://www.momsformouthguards.org). To locate an orthodontist nearby, visit "Find an Orthodontist" at [www.braces.org](http://www.braces.org) or ask your dentist for a referral.

For more information, visit [www.braces.org/sportsafety/sports\\_safety\\_facts.html](http://www.braces.org/sportsafety/sports_safety_facts.html).