

# SURVIVAL OF THE SMARTEST

Reduce injury in sport, wear a custom-fitted mouthguard.



[www.mouthguardawareness.info](http://www.mouthguardawareness.info)

## What type of mouthguard should I wear?

**There are many types of mouthguards available in Australia, ranging from cheap, over-the-counter products to professionally custom-fitted mouthguards.**

The Australian Dental Association (ADA) strongly recommends wearing a custom-fitted mouthguard, which is available from your dentist.

Over-the-counter mouthguards provide inadequate protection and the significant cost associated with a dental injury means investing in a custom-fitted mouthguard is worthwhile.

### Custom-fitted mouthguards

Custom-fitted mouthguards are made by a dentist, who takes an impression and creates a plaster model of your teeth. Custom fitting allows the dentist to accurately assess your mouth and provide the best fitting mouthguard that is most appropriate for your sport.

Custom-fitted mouthguards provide a better fit than other varieties, as they are made to suit your individual needs. A custom-fitted mouthguard is:

- Comfortable
- Tight-fitting
- Allows you to speak clearly
- Provides maximum resistance against being dislodged
- Won't restrict breathing

### Over-the-counter (boil and bite) mouthguards

These mouthguards are significantly less effective than custom-fitted mouthguards. Over-the-counter mouthguards can include stock mouthguards that do not require fitting and mouthguards that are self-fitting by immersing in hot water and then biting into the mouthguard.

These mouthguards don't fit as well as a custom-fitted mouthguard and are less comfortable to wear, which greatly decreases their effectiveness and sometimes can increase the risk of damage to your teeth. The ADA and Standards Australia do not recommend over-the-counter or 'boil and bite' mouthguards.

An over-the-counter mouthguard may be a short-term solution if there is absolutely no alternative available. However, even with careful attention to the directions, a poorly fitting mouthguard offers inadequate protection. Some studies place their degree of protection as only slightly better than wearing no mouthguard at all.

### How long will my mouthguard last?

Have your mouthguard assessed by your dentist at your regular check-up to ensure it still fits correctly. You may need a replacement if new, permanent teeth have come through or if the mouthguard has been damaged.

### How do I care for my mouthguard?

- Rinse in cold water after use
- Store in a rigid plastic container
- Keep out of direct sunlight - mouthguards will distort in high temperatures
- Occasionally rinse your mouthguard in a mouthwash
- Have your mouthguard assessed by your dentist at your regular check up
- Replace your mouthguard if it gets damaged

For more information on mouthguards and protecting teeth, visit:

[www.mouthguardawareness.info](http://www.mouthguardawareness.info)