

Take Care of Your Teeth: Use a Mouthguard!

What is a mouthguard? It is a rubber-like cover which fits snugly over your teeth and gums. It helps to prevent damage to teeth and lips, and helps protect against a broken or dislocated jaw. Mouthguards also help to prevent concussion caused by a heavy blow.



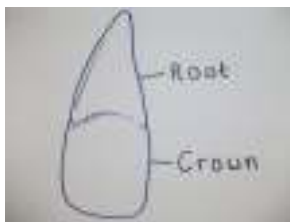
When should I wear one? It's important to wear a mouthguard for sports involving physical contact or moving objects, such as rugby, football, cricket, boxing and hockey.

Where can I get a mouthguard? Mouthguards are not available on the NHS, and costs can vary at different dental practices. Ask your dentist about the cost of getting a mouthguard. Dental work to repair injuries can be expensive, so it's much better to use a mouthguard and prevent injuries from happening. Kits for making mouthguards at home are available, but a mouthguard made by your dentist will be more comfortable to wear, and is more likely to stay in place on impact (British Dental Association).

How long will my mouthguard last? Young people are still growing and their teeth will be moving, and so a mouthguard may need replacing regularly to make sure it fits properly. For adults, mouthguards will need to be replaced at times due to wear and tear. When going for a dental check-up, take the mouthguard too so that your dentist can check the fit.

What will it look like? Mouthguards can be clear or made in different colours – even to match the colours of your sports team! Ask your dentist about the different mouthguards available.

What to do if a permanent tooth - not a milk tooth - is knocked out:



- 1.) Put a folded piece of gauze over the socket.
Bite down to help stop the bleeding
- 2.) Pick the tooth up by the crown – the part which you can usually see
- 3.) If the tooth is clean and in one piece, you can put it back in the socket-
but make sure it's facing the right way round!
Hold the crown of the tooth and push the root firmly into the socket.

Ideally, the tooth should go back into the socket within 30 minutes.
The sooner the tooth goes back into the socket, the better the chance of saving it.

- 4.) Bite down on a clean tissue / piece of gauze for 15 – 20 minutes.

If it's not possible to put the tooth back in, or if the tooth is very dirty, store it in some milk. Avoid cleaning the tooth with disinfectant or water, and don't let it dry out.

- 5.) It's important to go straight to the dentist, even if the tooth has been put back in.

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If a milk tooth has been knocked out, don't try to put it back in because this could damage the adult tooth underneath.

If a milk tooth or adult tooth has been knocked out and you do not have a dentist, call the emergency dental advice line: **0845 345 8995**.