



**Oral Health Professional Advisory Council (OHPAC)
Rhode Island Department of Health**

Position Statement:

Athletic Mouthguards

February 2005

"An athletic mouthguard is a resilient device or appliance placed inside the mouth (or inside and outside) to reduce mouth injuries particularly to the teeth and surrounding structures."
(ASTM International)

According to the National Youth Sports Safety Foundation, dental injuries are the most common type of oro-facial injury sustained during participation in sporting activities. The majority of these injuries can be prevented by the use of a properly fitted athletic mouthguard.

Properly fitted athletic mouthguards have been proven to greatly reduce the number and severity of oro-facial injuries. A mouthguard can protect the soft tissues of the face and mouth (lips, cheeks, tongue) from laceration as well as protect the teeth from fracture. Mouthguards also can protect the supporting structures/hard tissues (gingiva, alveolar/cortical bone, tooth sockets, and developing teeth) from injury. Research suggests that properly fitted and properly worn mouthguards may protect the mandible (lower jaw) from fracture and help reduce the incidence and severity of concussions.

In accordance with the Academy for Sports Dentistry, **The Oral Health Professional Advisory Council (OHPAC)** recommends the use of a properly fitted mouthguard; encourages the use of a custom fabricated mouthguard made over a dental cast and delivered under the supervision of a dentist; and supports a mandate for use of a properly fitted mouthguard in all collision and contact sports. Participants of individual sports that put the athlete at risk for oro-facial injury also should use custom fabricated mouthguards.