



# Hot Topics

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## **MOUTHGUARDS MAKE SPORTS SAFER**

As Fall approaches, schools across the country are preparing to do battle on football fields, basketball courts and baseball diamonds. Many parents worry about sports injuries, focusing their fears on broken legs or blows to the head. However teeth are vulnerable as well; each year there are thousands of injuries to the mouth and teeth, especially when mouthguards are not required.

There are three basic types of mouthguard: stock, boil-and-bite, and custom-fitted. Stock mouthguards are pre-formed and inexpensive; readily available, they nonetheless can make breathing and talking difficult. Boil-and-bite mouthguards offer a measure of customization. After being soaked in hot water, the mouthguard is shaped to fit an individual's teeth. The third option, custom-fitted, is the most expensive (at about \$100), but also the best fitting and easiest to wear.

Just about any sport can be made safer with mouthguards. By equipping your children with a snugly fitting mouthguard, the trauma of lost teeth or expensive restoration after an injury is prevented. Talk to your Pankey Institute-trained dentist for more information.