

# Protect Your Smile!



Whether you're on the field or in the stands, it's important to care for your teeth. Learn how to protect your smile so you can stay healthy and achieve your goals! Nobody knows this better than our Special Olympics athletes!



## Oral Trauma and Prevention

### How does a mouth injury happen?

- Playing sports
- Physical contact
- Using your teeth for things other than eating, like opening packages
- Eating very hot, cold, or hard foods
- Falls
- Clenching or grinding your teeth
- Using products/chemicals in your mouth that aren't meant for it

### When your mouth gets injured, it can lead to issues like:

- Flattened or cracked teeth
- Jaw pain, locking, clicking, or popping
- Headaches, earaches, general pain
- Difficulty chewing
- Tooth sensitivity
- Sores on gums or lips
- Dizziness

### You can prevent mouth injuries by:

- Using a mouthguard when playing sports
- Making sure your teeth are part when sleeping (night guards can help)
- Cutting back on foods/drinks high in sugar and caffeine
- Avoiding habits like biting fingernails, chewing on ice, etc.
- Talking to your dentist about mouth injury concerns during your 6-month checkup

## \* Mouthguards \*

Mouthguards are like shields that protect your mouth. They prevent teeth from chipping or breaking, and keeps your lips, tongue, and jaw safe from injuries.

### Why wear a mouth guard?

- Believe it or not, 70% of athletes have reported some kind of injury to the face or mouth\*
- These injuries can cause serious harm right away or damage might last for years to come
- The American Dental Association (ADA) recommends wearing a mouth guard that fits well to lower your risk of mouth injury

### Tips for wearing your mouthguard

- Wear your mouthguard at both practices and games
- After each use, use a soft toothbrush and dish soap to gently brush it, then rinse and store it in a safe, clean place, like a case

