ORAL FITNESS FACT SHEET

Injury Prevention with Mouthguards

Soldiers experience injuries to the mouth and teeth during training and sports activities. Replacing just one knocked-out tooth is time-consuming and can cost 20 times more than a custom-made mouthguard.

Mouthguards protect:

- The lips, cheeks, and tongue from being cut or bruised by the teeth
- Teeth from being knocked out, chipped or fractured

Tooth fracture that occurred during bayonet training

When should you wear a mouthguard?

- Training activities such as pugil stick training, hand to hand combat, confidence course training, bayonet training with an M16, and parachute operations
- Sporting activities (soccer, basketball, etc.) that can seriously harm the face or mouth as a result of:
  - Head-to-head contact
  - Hazardous falls
  - Tooth clenching
  - Blows to the mouth

What kind of mouthguard is right for me?

There are three types of mouthguards available that differ in comfort, fit, protection, and cost.

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Type	Pros	Cons	Comments
Ready-to-wear, stock	Least expensive Readily available in most sporting goods stores	Less protective Often bulky and uncomfortable May interfere with breathing and speech	Must be held in position by clenching the teeth together May not stay in place in mouth
Boil and bite	Slightly better fit Readily available in most sporting goods stores	Less protective than custom-made May not stay in place in mouth May interfere with speech	Are immersed in hot water and then formed in the mouth using one's fingers, lips, tongue, and suction
Custom-made	**Best fitting** **Most protective** Stays in place in mouth	More expensive	Requires visit to dental clinic Vacuum formed using a cast of the mouth

Care of your mouthguard

- Rinse it with cold water or mouthwash, before and after use. You can clean it with a toothbrush and toothpaste.
- Clean the mouthguard in cool, soapy water and rinse thoroughly, once a week.
- Keep the mouthguard away from high temperatures, hot water, hot surfaces, or direct sunlight.

When to replace your mouthguard

A mouthguard will eventually wear out. You should replace your mouthguard if it has:

- Holes or tears
- Bite-throughs
- Distortions

Play hard but play smart!

Protect yourself and your children with a mouthguard.