

April is National Facial Protection Month

ROSEMONT, Ill. – Every April, healthcare organizations unite to raise awareness of National Facial Protection Month – the campaign that encourages the use of safety equipment to prevent sports-related injuries to the head and face.

Founded by the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons (AAOMS), National Facial Protection Month encourages people of all ages to “play it safe” when engaging in collision sports and recreational activities.

One effective and relatively inexpensive piece of protective gear is a mouth guard, especially as children become engaged in contact sports. Athletes are 60 times more likely to suffer harm to their teeth if they are not wearing a mouth guard. However, according to the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO), while 99 percent of parents say youth should be required to wear mouth guard to play sports, 37 percent admit their child does not wear one.

The annual costs of all injuries, including orofacial injuries, sustained by young athletes have been estimated to be between \$500 million and \$1.8 billion, according to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (AAPD). These injuries result in 20 million lost days of school, according to the Academy of Sports Dentistry (ASD).

To avoid the pain and cost of dental and facial injuries, parents, caregivers and coaches are urged to encourage players to follow these tips:

- Mouth guards should be worn in all contact or collision sports.
- Helmets should always be worn when biking and playing football, softball, baseball, lacrosse, and hockey as well as during activities such as skateboarding, riding scooters or other physical activities that pose a risk of concussion. Helmets absorb the energy of an impact.
- Protective eyewear and helmets should be worn per the ASTM International, an organization that develops and publishes voluntary consensus standards.

Visit these National Facial Protection Month co-sponsor websites for more information and resources:

- The [Academy for Sports Dentistry](#) – a forum for dentists, doctors, athletic trainers and coaches to improve and protect athletes’ dental and oral health.
- The [American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry](#) – the membership organization representing about 10,500 pediatric dentists.
- The [American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons](#) – the membership organization representing more than 9,000 oral and maxillofacial surgeons.
- The [American Association of Orthodontists](#) – the membership organization more than 19,000 orthodontists.

About National Facial Protection Month

National Facial Protection Month is sponsored by the [Academy for Sports Dentistry](#), the [American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry](#), the [American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons](#) and the [American Association of Orthodontists](#). Visit the websites for more information and materials.

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