



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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DON'T LET FALL SPORTS TURN INTO A TOOTH EMERGENCY

Johnston, IA (August 10, 2010) – Hockey players are notorious for sporting gap-toothed smiles, but don't let that make you think less aggressive sports are any different. Since mouth guards became mandatory in football, mouth injuries have dropped dramatically. In fact, studies show that soccer players are approximately eight times more likely to sustain a dental injury than football players, and basketball players are 15 times more likely.¹

It's amazing how quickly a child's soccer game can turn from, "Go for the goal!" to a big, gaping hole. In fact, sports accidents are one of the leading causes of tooth loss among children and young adults, accounting for about five million lost teeth per year.²

"Just like helmets, kneepads or shin guards, mouth guards play an important role in protecting the body from harm when playing sports," said Dr. Ed Schooley, dental director for Delta Dental of Iowa. "The best choice is a mouth guard that fits well, and doesn't interfere with speech or breathing."

Here is what you need to know about the three different types of mouth guards:

1. Basic mouth guards are relatively inexpensive, have a pre-formed shape and can be found at drug stores. Since the fit can't be adjusted, they're less effective than a fitted option. This type of mouth guard is good for the occasional bike ride.
2. Mouth-formed or "boil-and-bite" mouth guards, purchased at many sporting goods stores, can be molded to the individual's mouth when heated for a better fit.
3. Custom-made mouth guards are considered the best option. Since this mouth guard is made by your dentist from a mold of your teeth, it will fit tightly and correctly. Although a custom mouth guard is the most expensive option available, it's a solid investment when compared with the thousands of dollars in dental work it can take to replace a lost tooth.

So when you are preparing for this fall's sports, don't forget one of the most important pieces of equipment – your mouth guard. For more information on your oral health and other timely oral health topics, go to Delta Dental of Iowa's Monthly Mouthful website at www.oralhealthia.com.

Delta Dental of Iowa is the largest and most experienced provider of dental benefits in the state. As a not-for-profit, Delta Dental of Iowa invests in oral health projects through the Delta Dental of Iowa Foundation that focus on access to care, prevention, education and research. The Iowa company is a member of the Delta Dental Plans Association, a national organization of not-for-profit Delta Dental plans. The national association is the largest dental benefits carrier in the nation providing coverage to 54 million people in more than 93,600 employer groups.

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¹American Dental Association, "Protecting teeth with mouthguards"
www.ada.org/prof/resources/pubs/jada/patient/patient_69.pdf, 2006.

²Gutmann JL, Gutmann MS. Cause, incidence, and prevention of trauma to teeth. *Dent Clin North Am.* 1995;39:1-13.