

April is National Facial Protection Month

Team up with your colleagues to get the word out to your community!

Every year oral and maxillofacial surgeons are called to their hospital emergency room to treat children who have sustained knocked out teeth, broken jaws and other facial injuries during organized or neighborhood sports activities. For most of these children, these terrible injuries could have been less severe or prevented entirely if they had worn a mouthguard, helmet or other protective head gear.

When kids don't wear mouth guards or protective head gear in sports activities, it's usually because parents and coaches are unaware of their importance. Many parents have limited sports backgrounds and don't realize the potential for serious facial injury in an impromptu neighborhood game of basketball or baseball, or simply riding a bike.

Although mouth guards are now generally considered standard equipment for football and hockey players, they really should be worn during any contact sport. And by contact sport, we don't just mean the kind of sport where one player knocks into another, but any sport in which the player is likely to have his or her face come into contact with the pavement or other hard object. The AAOMS recommends that kids who participate in soccer, extreme sports (BMX biking, skateboarding and in-line skating) and other common sports should wear a mouth guard and other protective helmets and equipment to protect them from facial injury.

What can you do?

As an oral and maxillofacial surgeon, yours is a respected voice in the community. There are many things you can do to raise awareness about sports safety and the important role played by mouth guards and helmets. You'll be doing kids, parents and coaches an important service, and you'll be promoting the specialty, too!

Let local media know:

Send a news release to local print and electronic media. Be sure to include school newspapers on your distribution list (elementary, middle, junior and high schools). For your convenience, you'll find a news release template at aaoms.org.

Make presentations to:

- Local schools & their sports teams
- Local YMCA, YWCA, JCCA, Boys' and Girls' Clubs
- Your city parks & recreation department
- Local athletic associations
- Your own patients and their parents

Distribute copies of the new AAOMS Patient Information Pamphlet "Treating and Preventing Facial Injury" (available through the [AAOMS e-store](#)) to:

- your patients
- Local schools & their sports teams

- Libraries
- Gyms and other workout venues

Visit aaoms.org for additional information.

National Facial Protection Month is a cooperative effort of:

- The American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons
- The American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry
- The American Association of Orthodontists

Team up with your colleagues from the AAOMS and these associations to make the most of National Facial Protection Month!



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QUESTION: WHEN DO YOU NEED A MOUTH GUARD, HELMET OR OTHER PROTECTIVE GEAR?

ANSWER: ANY TIME YOU'RE ENGAGED IN SPORTS!

Let's work together to protect your smile and good looks. Just by wearing a mouth guard, you cut the risk of knocking out teeth or breaking your jaw. A helmet or face mask will protect you against other serious facial injuries.

Chances are if you play in organized sports, your coach may already require that you wear protective gear. but did you know that even when you're riding your bike or getting a game together with the kids in your neighborhood that it's a good idea to wear a mouth guard, helmet and/or face guard?

Any time you're engaged in an activity where your face can come in contact with something hard—say another player, a ball, the pavement, or any hard object—it's a time that you should be wearing a mouth guard and other protective gear!

Repairing the problems that happen to teeth, jaws and other facial features is uncomfortable for the patient— and can cost *thousands* of dollars. Many injuries can be far less severe or even prevented altogether by the simple act of wearing a mouth guard and the right protective gear!

GET INTO THE FACIAL PROTECTION HABIT!

April is National Facial Protection Month is sponsored by the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, American Association of Orthodontists and the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.

Facial protection is always a good idea!.

For more information, visit www.braces.org, www.aaoms.org or www.aapd.org.

