

## PROTECTING YOUR ATHLETE'S SMILE

The mouth is a frequently injured area of the body during contact sports. Research has shown that most mouth injuries occur when athletes are not wearing a mouthguard. Wearing a mouthguard can help prevent broken teeth, cuts on the lips and tongue, and jaw injuries.





*It's easy to smile when you feel good. LifeSmile is a wellness program that's part of your Delta Dental benefits provided by your employer. It's easier to maintain good oral health habits when you have some support. LifeSmile has the answers to your dental questions and can help keep you smiling for a lifetime.*

## What Makes a Good Mouthguard?

- Mouthguards protect the teeth from trauma or loss and reduce the risk for jaw fractures.
- Mouthguards also minimize lacerated and bruised lips and cheeks by keeping these soft tissue areas away from the teeth, and this is especially true for children with braces.
- An effective mouthguard should remain in place during the activity while not interfering with speech or breathing.
- It should provide maximum protection and be comfortable to wear.
- Wearing a mouthguard is highly recommended for those participating in boxing, basketball, baseball, field hockey, football, ice hockey, lacrosse, martial arts, soccer, wrestling, water polo and rugby.
- Participants in recreational activities such as skateboarding and bicycling should also wear mouthguards, especially in competition.

## Which Mouthguard Is Right For Your Athlete?

- **Stock/Ready-made**  
Available in various sizes and shapes, but cannot be adjusted to fit your mouth. Often, they are loose and bulky and may interfere with speaking or breathing.
- **Mouth-formed/Boil & Bite**  
These plastic mouthguard shells are boiled in water for a few seconds, cooled under tap water and molded directly in the mouth. Compared to custom-made guards, the fit is not as accurate, and it may not last as long.
- **Custom-made**  
This type is highly recommended and the most effective. Dentists make them at the office or order them from a laboratory from a cast of your teeth. Young athletes are more likely to wear a mouthguard that fits comfortably, stays in place and allows for better breathing.

LifeSmile from Delta Dental can help you prevent disease and keep you and your child on the path toward a healthier, happier life. Healthy Smile, Happy Life: Take advantage of numerous free resources for improving your oral health at [deltadentalmn.org/oral-health](http://deltadentalmn.org/oral-health).