



For Immediate Release

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Sport a Healthy Smile – Use a Mouthguard

[North Brunswick, NJ] -- As your child gets ready for the fall sports season, don't forget to have her fitted for a mouthguard. Mouthguards do more than protect your child's teeth. They also lessen the possibility of injury to the tongue, jaw, lips and face. And, if your child wears braces, a mouthguard protects against damage to them, too.

Dr. Elisa Velazquez is a pediatric dentist and member of the New Jersey Dental Association who practices in Toms River and Manahawkin. Dr. Lisa, as she is known to her patients, is a strong advocate for using a mouthguard during all types of sporting activities. "Mouthguards protect the jaw, face and teeth from injury during contact sports, but are just as important for gymnasts, cheerleaders and other athletes who may take a hard fall or hit."

There are several types of mouthguard on the market. The best quality is one that is custom fit by your dentist. But other types are available from sporting goods stores. "Boil and bite" guards are softened in hot water, placed in the mouth while warm and will shape to the athlete's teeth. "Stock" guards are also available, but are not customizable and offer the least protection.

It's important for an athlete to wear a guard both during practice and games, and to keep them clean between uses. Clean with a toothbrush and toothpaste or water. Have your young athlete bring the mouthguard to the dentist as part of his check-up. Your growing child may need to have the mouthguard re-fit over the course of their athletic career.

The New Jersey Dental Association offers a few other tips about smile safety during sports season:

- Although mouthguards are usually worn only on the upper teeth, if your child wears braces they may need additional protection for the lower teeth. Check with your orthodontist.
- Store the guard in a container that both protects the guard and offers ventilation to reduce the growth of bacteria.
- Retainers should not be worn during sports.
- Mouthguards should be replaced when they show signs of wear.

If your child hasn't seen a dentist to prepare for fall sports, the New Jersey Dental Association offers a Find a Dentist feature on its website, www.njda.org.

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"The New Jersey Dental Association serves and supports its members and fosters the advancement of quality, ethical oral healthcare for the public." The NJDA, headquartered in North Brunswick, NJ, is the largest dental organization in the state. More than 2/3 of all licensed, practicing dentists in NJ are members of the New Jersey Dental Association.