

## ORAL HEALTH

May 2012



With an Improving Understanding of MCH grant, FamilyVoices IMPACT works to develop ways to improve health and wellness for all children and families, and to encourage partnerships between families and professionals for children's good health.

[www.familyvoices.org](http://www.familyvoices.org) and [www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org](http://www.brightfuturesforfamilies.org).

This digest is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services—Health Resources and Services Administration—Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Division of Child, Adolescent, and Family Health UCMC21535.

## Mouthguards for Safety!

Does your child or teen participate in sports? Does he or she wear a mouth guard to protect teeth and the rest of the mouth from serious injury? The National Youth Sports Foundation for the Prevention of Athletic Injuries, Inc. reports that dental injuries are the most common kind of facial injury that happens during sports. And they can be expensive to repair. These injuries don't just happen in the potentially hard-hitting sports like football and boxing. They also happen frequently in softball, basketball, baseball, soccer, volleyball, wrestling, and other sports—even if the athlete is wearing a helmet or face mask.

### Types of Mouthguards

What's the best kind of mouthguard for your young athlete? The one he or she will actually wear! There are three basic types:

- **Custom-fit:** The dentist makes an impression of your child's teeth and a dental lab makes the guard. These are typically the most expensive kind, but can be the best fitting and most comfortable kind to wear.
- **Boil-to-fit:** This guard is made of a special material that is softened by putting it in hot water. It is then shaped to the teeth by using the fingers and tongue, and by biting. It may not fit as well as the custom-fit type, but is less expensive and can be readily found in sports stores.

- **Stock:** This guard comes in predetermined sizes and shapes. The fit can't be adjusted so the guard can be more uncomfortable. These are also found in sports stores.

Talk to your child's dentist about options that might be appropriate for your child. And talk to your child about how important it is to wear a mouthguard!

## Can Poor Dental Health Lead to Unhealthy Food Choices?

Here's a twist on the usual oral health message that too many sugary foods can lead to poor dental health. A research study starting in Australia has flipped this idea around to see if the child who has many dental problems ends up choosing easier-to-chew foods. That's less likely to mean fresh fruits, grains, vegetables, and lean meats. Fewer healthy food choices may increase the chance of obesity and other health problems later on. The researchers are especially interested in children born pre-term, who are more likely to be obese or have chronic disease later in life than full-term infants. Read more about this study at: [www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/244781.php](http://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/244781.php)

