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MAKE A  
**Mouthguard**  
PART OF YOUR UNIFORM  
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“Spring often brings a flood of patients suffering with head, mouth and facial injuries resulting from sports-related accidents to the doctor’s offices and emergency rooms,” according to the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons’ website. When pulling together your sports equipment, don’t forget about getting a mouth-guard. Whether you’re participating organized sports or are a weekend warrior, you should think about the importance of protecting your mouth. A properly fitted mouth-guard, or mouth protector, is a key piece of athletic gear that can help protect your smile. People typically think about wearing mouth-guards in contact sports, such as football, basketball, boxing or hockey, but the risk of experiencing an oral injury also exists in noncontact sports, such as gymnastics, baseball, or skateboarding. Mouth-guards cushion blows that might otherwise cause broken teeth and injuries to the lips, tongue, face or jaw. It is never too early to start wearing a mouth-guard. As soon as you begin to look into sports for you or your child, talk to us-your Dental experts. Good habits can never start too early!

- Dr. Cris Turman

# March

## Dental Digest

March 2018 Volume 2, Issue 3



## March Madness Dental Sadness

March Madness is upon us! It’s time for the 80th annual National Collegiate Athletic Association basketball tournament. Each year 68 college teams compete in games to determine who will win the grandest prize of all, the National Championship. Teams are initially organized into four different regions and through “bracket elimination,” winning teams advance on to the next round.

### So you think you know Everything about the Playoffs?

Are you a hardcore fan? March Madness enthusiasts know it all! They can tell you that the odds of predicting who will advance in the brackets are nearly impossible. Still, it doesn’t prevent millions of people from trying. Every year, billions of dollars in illegal bets are placed on various teams.

### Some Facts you Don’t Know

If there’s trouble on the court, most fans assume players will be undone by knee and ankle injuries. But did you know that many players will end up leaving the game due to dental injuries?

### The Unmentioned Injury

The numbers are startling. In a dental study published in the August 2008 edition of Dental Traumatology, 80.6% of professional and 37.7% of semi-professional players experienced dental injuries during basketball practices. In another study conducted by the University of Southern California in 2007, basketball players suffered the highest rate of dental trauma compared to all other intercollegiate sports. The data broke down to over 10 injuries per 100 athletes in a typical season of play.

What’s even more shocking is the lack of athletic mouthguards used in the sport. Awareness of their importance in preventing orofacial injuries was high, 80.1%, but only 7% of college basketball players actually use dental protection.

### Making Sense of the Data

As any devout March Madness fan can tell you, the game continues to grow more physical and contact-heavy with each passing year. Mouthguards for basketball players should be a routine part of a player’s protective gear.



## **Proper Fit**

Mouthguards are not a one size fits all. Our teeth, jaw, and mouth vary in size and shape from person to person. Sporting goods and department stores often carry pre-formed or mouth-formed guards. The poorest fit will come from pre-formed guards. These require the mouth to be closed to hold them in place making breathing and talking difficult. Mouth-formed or often known as “boil-and-bite” mouthguards will fit a bit better with less bulk. However, they will not form to the teeth as tightly and comfortably as a custom-fitted mouthguard.

Custom-fitted mouthguards are designed with your dental history in mind along with the specific sport you are playing. This means any braces or appliances you have will be protected as well. To make a custom-fitted mouthguard Dr. Turman will take an impression of your teeth. The cast of your impression makes a near perfect model of your mouth which Dr. Turman will use to mold the mouthguard material of choice around, getting in all nooks necessary for a proper fit. Once the mouthguard is ready, Dr. Turman will inspect the mouthguard and make sure you are satisfied with the fit.

## **Comfort**

Since your mouthguard is made from a direct impression of your mouth there isn't any unwanted or unnecessary bulky material left over. The mouthguard should stay put in your mouth without having to keep your mouth closed. This makes breathing, talking and swallowing much easier.

Because custom fit mouthguards are more comfortable than non-custom ones they are more likely to be worn. For children, we find comfort to be of even more importance. Less taking it out during practice, complaining it hurts and “forgetting” to wear it. Introducing custom-fit mouthguards to children when they are young, increases the chances they will continue wearing them into adulthood.

## **Maximum Protection**

A custom-fitted mouthguard will cover and protect all of your teeth. If impact takes place, this mouthguard will absorb the shock and distribute the impact properly. According to the International Academy of Sports Dentistry; a properly fabricated mouthguard “separates the mandible (lower jaw) and maxilla (upper jaw), thereby buffering the transmission of concussive effect to the base of the brain”. As concussions continue to rise in young athletes, properly fit mouthguards are an intelligent preventative measure for anyone to add to contact sports.

Custom-fitted dental mouthguards also provide protection to any appliances you have in your mouth. Braces, retainers, implant-supported dentures, etc. which can be costly to repair.

## **Correct Thickness**

As an athlete, it is best to explain to Dr. Turman exactly what activities the mouthguard will be used for. Heavy contact sports such as football will require the appropriate thickness to handle the impact, whereas low contact sport can be thinner.

## **Cost**

As with most dentistry, prevention is key. Being pro-active and wearing a mouthguard before an injury takes place can save you in costly dental reconstructive services down the road. While your cheapest option of a mouthguard will be a pre-formed or bite-and-boil one from the drug store, you will also get cheap coverage and comfort. The cost of knocked out teeth, stitches from braces going through the lip or even worse trauma is far more expensive than a custom-fitted mouthguard. Protecting costly dental work you have already had done such as porcelain veneers or dental implants is a great idea as well.

Don't get sidelined. Call Cris Turman, DDS and see what you can do to play a smarter game!