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DENTAL ASSOCIATION

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**Oro-dental
Trauma**

What is oro-dental trauma?

Oral injuries account for 5 percent of all injuries and craniofacial trauma (head, face, and oral cavity) is responsible for about half of the estimated total 8.5 million trauma deaths worldwide.

They include fractures of the jaws and other facial bones, as well as fractures, dislocations and loss of teeth. Risk factors include traffic and bicycle accidents, falls, physical violence, contact sports and tongue and lip piercings.

What can you do to prevent oro-dental trauma?

Oral and dental trauma and injuries can happen frequently when practicing contact and combat sports without proper protection. Up to 40% of dental injuries in older adolescents and adults occur while playing sports.

- **Wear a mouthguard:** a mouthguard is recommended even if you only practice your sport occasionally. Avoid store-bought, standard mouthguards that do not fit well and offer poor protection.
- **Favour custom-made mouthguards:** for children and adolescents whose mouths are still developing, it may be appropriate to use standard mouthguards that will then be adapted by a dentist. Do not hesitate to ask your dentist for advice.
- **Wear a face cage / shield when necessary:** a face cage protects against trauma to the face, especially when playing certain sports like hockey, cricket and baseball.
- **Wear a helmet recommended for your sport:** the frequency and severity of craniofacial trauma can be reduced if you wear the appropriate helmet for the sport in which you are participating.

What is the impact of oro-dental trauma?

- Oral trauma can impact everyday life and particularly affects children and young adults, it can have a significant physical, psychosocial, and economic impact.
- Approximately half of all trauma involving permanent teeth requires dental treatment and around 20% of people suffer from trauma to teeth at some point in their life.
- Oral injuries are often complex and occur together with other bodily injury and can require costly and time-consuming treatment.
- Violence and abuse are also important causes of oral injuries and have serious, lifelong consequences. Dentists may be the first or only point of contact for victims in a healthcare setting. Oral health professionals are key to helping to recognize signs of abuse, which commonly affect the head, neck, or face.