

Healthy Teens

May 2019 Parent Newsletter



Articles

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Does My Teen Need a Mouthguard?

What would happen if your teen lost one or two of their front teeth? While broken bones can heal, broken teeth need to be repaired or even replaced to restore their function. The ways we smile, speak and eat are all affected by broken or missing teeth.

A mouthguard is an essential part of your teen's sports gear. It typically fits over their top teeth and protects the teeth, lips, tongue, face and jaw from injury. Many organized sports require wearing a mouthguard when there is risk of contact with another player or sports equipment. But a mouthguard can protect your teen's mouth during any activity when there is a risk of dental injury or fall (e.g. skating).

There are three different types of mouthguards that your teen could use – stock, boil and bite, and custom fit. They differ in cost,

comfort and how well they protect against injury.

Here are a few tips for taking care of a mouthguard:

- Rinse before and after use
- Regularly clean it in cool water with dish soap
- Store and carry it in a sturdy vented container
- Never leave it in the sun or hot water

If your teen's mouthguard shows signs of wear, damage or is ill-fitting, it is time to get a new one. Teens and children have mouths that are still growing and changing so they may need to have their mouthguard replaced more often.

➤ **For more information about mouthguards, visit myhealthalberta.ca and search 'mouthgurads' or ask your dental professional**

April 29th – May 5th is Screen Free Week. Take a break from digital entertainment and explore activities beyond the screen such as reading, getting active outdoors, playing games and spending more time with family and friends. For more information, visit <http://www.screenfree.org/>



**Alberta Health
Services**

All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) Safety

Many Albertans take out their ATVs in the summertime. Riding an ATV can be thrilling but it is important to remember that ATVs are not toys; they are fast, powerful machines that need strength and skill to operate safely.

In 2016, 665 children were seen in Alberta's emergency departments due to ATV-related injuries; 54 required hospital admission. Experts at Alberta Health Services state that nobody younger than 16 years of age should ride an ATV anytime, anywhere, any size. This is because teens under 16 are not physically and mentally ready to handle an ATV, regardless of its size and are at higher risk of serious injury and death than those 16 years and older. When your teen is 16, they should take a Smart Risk Approach to manage the risks of ATVs. Here are a few tips to help keep them safe:

Look First. Make sure headlights, taillights and the muffler work before riding. Follow posted signs and stay on the trails. Driving away from



marked trails can result in encountering unexpected obstacles, like ditches, drop-offs, cliffs and trees.

Wear the Gear. Always wear an approved motorcycle or ATV helmet – it is the law. Make sure it fits snugly and is securely buckled up to protect you from a head injury. Eye protection, like a helmet shield or riding goggles, boots and gloves will also help keep your teen safe.

Get Trained. Taking an ATV training course is the best way to understand and manage ATV risks. Riding safely requires skill and practice.

Drive Sober. Even one drink can

impair your teen's judgement and pose dangerous, even fatal risks. It can also result in impaired driving charges. Your teen should never drink or use drugs and drive an ATV.

These Smart Risk strategies will help your teen, 16 years or older, enjoy many summers of fun and safe ATVing.

> For more information about ATV safety in Alberta, visit <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/injprev/Page4861.aspx>