



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Delta Dental survey indicates widespread lack of mouth guard use in kids' sports**

*Millions of U.S. children are at risk for sports-related oral injuries*

**OAK BROOK, Ill. — October 9, 2019 —** With parents in the United States packing away summer sports gear to ramp up for the fall sports season, there is an important piece of protective equipment that remains relevant year-round ... the mouth guard. However, a recent national survey of parents, sponsored by Delta Dental, indicates a widespread lack of mouth guard use in sporting activities that pose risks to children's teeth and facial bones. According to the Children's Oral Health Survey, a majority of American children are not wearing mouth guards during basketball (72%), soccer (71%), and baseball (70%), among other sports.

This Delta Dental-sponsored survey identified that a significant gap in mouth guard use translates to millions of children nationwide participating in sports unprotected. For example, the results showed about 37 million children age 12 years old and under are not wearing mouth guards while playing soccer.

"A child's healthy smile needs to last a lifetime. Sports-related injuries cause millions of lost teeth annually. Well-fitted mouth guards can help significantly reduce the possibility of oral injuries during sporting activities, including non-contact sports too," said Joe Dill, DDS, MBA, Delta Dental Plans Association's vice president of dental science and network strategy. "Young athletes can grow to appreciate the mouth guard as one more essential layer of their protective uniforms."

Respondents also indicated their children are not wearing mouth guards during gymnastics (79%), volleyball (65%), skiing (61%), rugby (48%), lacrosse (40%), ice hockey (38%), field hockey (34%), boxing (34%), and football (26%).

#### **Improving kids' oral care playbook**

Learn more about various types of mouth guards in the Delta Dental Grin! web article ["Your game plan for defeating sports-related problems."](#) This informational feature also discusses how mouth guards can help to protect against:

- Lost or cracked teeth.
- Fractures to roots, crowns, cheekbones and jawbones.
- Teeth being pushed out of the socket.
- Abrasions and broken or damaged blood vessels.
- Cuts to soft tissue, such as the tongue, cheeks, gums and lips.

#### **About the survey**

The Children's Oral Health Survey was conducted between December 31, 2018, and January 13, 2019, among a nationally representative sample of 1,481 parents of children ages 12 and under. The margin of error is +/- 3%.

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**About Delta Dental Plans Association**

Delta Dental Plans Association, based in Oak Brook, Illinois, is the not-for-profit national association of the 39 independent Delta Dental companies. Through these companies, Delta Dental is the nation's largest provider of dental insurance, covering more than 80 million Americans, and offering the country's largest dental network with approximately 156,000 participating dentists. In 2017, Delta Dental companies provided more than \$61 million in direct and in-kind community outreach support to improve the oral health of adults, children and infants in local communities across the country. For more information, visit [www.deltadental.com](http://www.deltadental.com).

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