



## Psychological Impact of Mouthguards: Mouth Protection and Safety in Athletics

Meir Leih\*

Department of Dentistry, University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel

### DESCRIPTION

Mouthguards serve as a physical symbol of protection, offering support against potential dental injuries. Studies have shown that athletes wear mouthguards report feeling more secure and self-assured during gameplay. This heightened sense of safety translates into improved focus and concentration, allowing athletes to perform at their best without the distraction about potential injuries. Athletes invest significant time and effort into improving their skills and ensuring their bodies are at peak condition. Beyond their primary function of safe guarding dental health, mouthguards plays an important role in shaping athletes perceptions of safety, confidence, and performance on the field. The psychological benefits of mouthguards extend beyond physical protection. Research indicates that wearing a mouthguard can enhance an athlete's perceived self-efficacy, which refers to their belief in their ability to achieve success in interesting situations. This mindset shift can significantly impact performance, as athletes approach their sport with greater resilience and determination.

Athletes are constantly seeking ways to gain a competitive edge and optimize their performance. Surprisingly, the use of mouthguards has been linked to improvements in athletic performance beyond their protective function. One theory suggests that mouthguards help reduce the impact of jaw clenching and muscle tension, leading to enhanced muscle relaxation and better overall biomechanical efficiency. The psychological effects of wearing a mouthguard can contribute to

performance enhancement. Studies have found that athletes who wear mouthguards exhibit increased levels of stimulating regulation, allowing them to maintain optimal focus and intensity throughout the game. Additionally, the act of wearing a mouthguard can serve as a psychological anchor, reminding athletes of their training, preparation, and commitment to excellence. In addition to individual benefits, the widespread adoption of mouthguards promotes a culture of safety and injury prevention within sports communities. Coaches, parents, and administrators play an important role in advocating for the use of mouthguards among athletes of all ages and skill levels. By emphasizing the importance of mouthguard usage, sports organizations can instill a sense of responsibility and accountability among participants, selecting their long-term health and well-being.

Moreover, integrating mouthguard education and awareness campaigns into sports programs can help in common misconceptions and myths surrounding their efficacy and comfort. Providing athletes with access to properly fitted and customized mouthguards further reinforces the message that safety is non-negotiable in sports. Despite the numerous benefits of mouthguard use, some athletes may still hesitate to incorporate them into their routine. Common barriers include concerns about comfort, breathing difficulties, and perceived interference with communication on the field. Addressing these concerns requires a multifaceted approach that combines education, technology, and customization.

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**Correspondence to:** Meir Leih, Department of Dentistry, University of Haifa, Haifa, Israel, E-mail: meir@gmail.com

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