

Custom Mouthguards — Sports Protection and Night Guards

Canonical: <https://directory.collinsstreetspecialistcentre.com.au/general-cosmetic-dentistry/custom-mouthguards-sports-protection-and-night-guards/>

Description:

Custom-fitted mouthguards for sports and night guards for teeth grinding. Why custom beats store-bought for protection, comfort, and durability.

Details:

Collins Street Specialist Centre — Custom Mouthguards: Sports Protection and Night Guards

A mouthguard is one of the simplest and most clinically effective pieces of protective equipment available, yet it remains among the most frequently overlooked. Whether you're an elite athlete, a weekend sportsperson, or someone who grinds their teeth at night, a properly fitted mouthguard can prevent serious dental injuries, save thousands of dollars in emergency treatment, and protect your long-term oral health.

Collins Street Specialist Centre (CSSC) is a Melbourne-based specialist dental centre whose general and cosmetic dentists fabricate custom-fitted mouthguards that offer meaningfully better protection, comfort, and fit than anything you'll find off the shelf. We also work closely with our oral and maxillofacial surgeons and prosthodontists when patients come to us with sports-related dental injuries or the long-term effects of bruxism.

Why mouthguards matter

The evidence is clear. Dental injuries are among the most common injuries in Australian sport. A knocked-out permanent tooth, a fractured jaw, or a cracked restoration can mean extensive, costly treatment and, in many cases, a lifetime of ongoing dental work.

For patients who grind their teeth, the damage is more gradual but equally serious. Chronic bruxism can wear teeth down to stumps, fracture restorations, and cause persistent jaw pain and headaches.

In both cases, a well-fitted mouthguard is the most important frontline protection available.

Sports mouthguards — protecting your smile on the field

Which sports require mouthguards?

In Australia, mouthguards are clinically indicated across a wide range of popular sports:

- **Australian Rules Football (AFL)** — one of the highest-risk sports for orofacial injuries, given the physical contact, contested marks, and high-speed collisions - **Rugby union and rugby league** — heavy contact sports with substantial risk of facial impact - **Cricket** — batsmen, wicketkeepers, and close fielders face real risk from hard balls travelling at speed - **Basketball** — elbows, accidental collisions, and contact beneath the basket make dental injuries a common presentation - **Hockey (field and ice)** — stick and ball or puck impacts pose genuine danger to the teeth - **Boxing, martial arts, and combat sports** — carry a well-documented risk of direct facial trauma - **Mountain biking and BMX** — falls at speed onto hard surfaces can result in severe orofacial injury - **Skateboarding**

— facial injuries from falls are a frequent clinical presentation

Even in non-contact sports like gymnastics, cycling, or rock climbing, a mouthguard is sound preventive insurance against unexpected falls or impacts.

Types of mouthguards — not all are created equal

There are three main categories of mouthguards, and the differences in protection, comfort, and clinical effectiveness are considerable.

****Stock (ready-made) mouthguards****

Available from pharmacies and sports retailers, stock mouthguards come in pre-formed sizes — small, medium, and large. They're the cheapest option but also the least effective. Because they can't be adjusted to fit an individual's teeth, they tend to be bulky, uncomfortable, and interfere with breathing and speech. More critically, they provide inferior protection because they don't sit snugly against the teeth and can't reliably absorb and distribute impact forces.

****Boil-and-bite mouthguards****

A step up from stock guards, boil-and-bite options are softened in hot water and moulded to the teeth by biting into the warm material. They offer a better fit than stock guards, but the adaptation is limited. The material thins significantly in critical areas during moulding, the overall fit varies between patients, and they tend to loosen over time.

****Custom-fitted mouthguards****

Custom mouthguards are fabricated by a dental professional using a precise impression or digital scan of the patient's teeth. The appliance is produced in a specialist dental laboratory from high-quality, pressure-laminated material that maintains consistent thickness where it matters most — across the anterior teeth and occlusal surfaces.

Custom mouthguards offer: - ****Superior protection**** — even material thickness engineered to absorb and distribute impact forces effectively - ****Excellent retention**** — the snug fit keeps the guard in place during activity without requiring the patient to clench their jaw - ****Comfort**** — a well-fitted guard is barely noticeable, which means athletes are far more likely to actually wear it - ****Unimpeded breathing and speech**** — particularly important for communication during team sports - ****Durability**** — professional-grade materials last significantly longer than commercial alternatives

What to expect: the fitting process for a custom sports mouthguard

Getting a custom mouthguard at Collins Street Specialist Centre involves two straightforward appointments:

1. ****Appointment one (approximately 15–20 minutes):**** Your dentist takes a precise impression or digital scan of your upper teeth (and lower teeth where indicated). You also choose a colour — mouthguards are available in a range of colours, team colours, or clear.
2. ****Laboratory fabrication:**** The impression goes to a specialist dental laboratory, where the mouthguard is fabricated from pressure-laminated ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA). This process ensures consistent thickness and material density throughout the appliance.
3. ****Appointment two (approximately 10–15 minutes):**** You return to try in the completed mouthguard. Your dentist checks the fit, makes any minor adjustments, and confirms you're happy with the comfort and retention.

The whole process typically takes about one week from impression to fitting.

Mouthguards for children and adolescents

Children and teenagers who play sport need mouthguards — and arguably have a greater clinical need for them, given how much is at stake with their developing permanent teeth. A dental injury to a child's permanent tooth can carry lifelong consequences well beyond the initial trauma.

Custom mouthguards for younger patients are designed with growth in mind. Because children's teeth change as they develop and new permanent teeth continue to come through, their mouthguards typically need replacing more often — generally every 12 to 18 months, or whenever the fit becomes noticeably compromised.

The right time to have a mouthguard professionally fitted is as soon as the permanent front teeth have erupted, which usually happens around age 7 to 8. For younger children still in their primary dentition, a boil-and-bite guard may be acceptable as a short-term measure, but a custom-fitted guard remains the clinical gold standard once permanent teeth are present.

Night guards — protection against teeth grinding

What is bruxism?

Bruxism — habitual grinding or clenching of the teeth — is remarkably common. Many patients grind during sleep without any awareness of it, often only finding out when a partner notices the noise or a dentist spots the characteristic wear patterns at a routine check-up.

Bruxism can be associated with stress, sleep disorders, certain medications, or occlusal factors. In many cases the causes are mixed, and a thorough clinical assessment helps identify the underlying drivers and the most appropriate management approach.

How night guards help

An occlusal splint, commonly called a night guard, is a custom-fabricated appliance worn during sleep that creates a protective barrier between the upper and lower teeth. It serves several important functions:

- **Prevents direct tooth-on-tooth contact,** stopping further wear of the tooth surfaces
- **Distributes occlusal forces** more evenly across the jaw, reducing concentrated stress on individual teeth and restorations
- **Reduces masticatory muscle tension** and can ease associated symptoms including morning headaches and jaw pain
- **Protects dental restorations** — crowns, veneers, and composite restorations are all vulnerable to the forces generated during bruxism

Types of night guards

Soft night guards are made from flexible, resilient material and are generally suited to mild bruxism or clenching. They offer good initial comfort but may not hold up for patients with moderate to severe grinding habits.

Hard acrylic splints are the most commonly prescribed option for moderate to severe bruxism. Fabricated from rigid acrylic and custom-fitted to the patient's teeth, they're durable, easy to clean, and clinically effective at protecting the dentition and reducing masticatory muscle strain.

Dual-laminate splints combine a soft inner layer for comfort with a hard outer layer for durability. They can work well for patients who find hard acrylic splints uncomfortable during the initial adjustment period.

Your dentist will recommend the most appropriate appliance based on the severity of your grinding, the condition of your existing teeth and restorations, and your individual comfort needs.

What to expect: the fitting process for a night guard

The process follows the same pathway as a sports mouthguard:

1. Your dentist takes a detailed impression or digital scan of your teeth 2. The night guard is fabricated in a specialist dental laboratory to precise specifications 3. At a fitting appointment, the appliance is tried in, adjusted as needed, and your bite is assessed carefully to confirm even contact across the guard

Your dentist may also assess your occlusion and temporomandibular joint function to determine whether additional management — such as occlusal adjustment, orthodontic review, or referral to one of our oral and maxillofacial surgeons for a formal TMJ assessment — would be beneficial.

Caring for your mouthguard

Whether you have a sports mouthguard or a night guard, looking after it properly extends its working life and keeps it hygienic:

- ****Rinse after each use**** with cool water — warm water can distort thermoplastic materials - ****Clean regularly**** with a soft toothbrush and mild soap or non-abrasive toothpaste - ****Store in a ventilated case**** to allow air circulation and minimise bacterial build-up - ****Keep away from heat**** — don't leave it in direct sunlight, a hot car, or near heaters - ****Bring it to dental appointments**** so your dentist can check the fit and condition - ****Replace when worn**** — sports mouthguards typically last one to two seasons; night guards may last several years depending on how severely you grind

When to replace your mouthguard

Replace your mouthguard if: - It becomes loose or no longer fits snugly - There are visible signs of wear, thinning, or perforation - It develops a persistent odour despite thorough cleaning - Your dental work changes — new restorations, crowns, or orthodontic treatment will alter the fit - For children: whenever the fit is compromised by growth or new permanent teeth coming through

The CSSC approach — comprehensive, coordinated care

At Collins Street Specialist Centre, mouthguard fabrication is one part of a broader approach to protecting and restoring your oral health. Our team includes:

- ****General and cosmetic dentists**** who fabricate custom mouthguards and night guards and provide thorough preventive assessments - ****Oral and maxillofacial surgeons**** who manage sports-related orofacial injuries, including jaw fractures, dentoalveolar trauma, and knocked-out teeth - ****Prosthodontists**** who restore teeth damaged by trauma or long-term wear with crowns, veneers, implants, and complex full-mouth rehabilitation - ****Orthodontists**** who can address underlying bite discrepancies that may contribute to bruxism or increase the risk of dental injury - ****Paediatric dentists**** who specialise in children's dental injuries and age-appropriate preventive care

This means that whether you need a mouthguard for injury prevention, emergency care after a sporting accident, or comprehensive restoration of teeth damaged by years of grinding, our team can manage your care from initial presentation through to completion — all within a single specialist centre.

Frequently asked questions

****How much does a custom mouthguard cost?**** Costs vary depending on the type and clinical complexity involved. Many private health insurance policies cover custom mouthguards, particularly for children. Our team can provide a detailed quote and help you understand your insurance entitlements before treatment begins.

****Can I wear a mouthguard with orthodontic braces?**** Yes. Specialised mouthguards can be made to fit over fixed orthodontic appliances. These are particularly important for patients in active orthodontic treatment, as brackets and wires can cause additional soft tissue lacerations during impact. Your orthodontist or dentist can advise on the best option for your situation.

****Should I wear a mouthguard on the upper teeth, lower teeth, or both?**** Most sports mouthguards are designed for the upper arch, as the maxillary teeth are most vulnerable to direct impact. In some situations, a lower guard may also be indicated. Night guards can be fabricated for either arch, depending on your dentist's clinical assessment and your individual bite requirements.

****My child only plays social sport — do they still need a mouthguard?**** Yes. Dental injuries don't distinguish between competitive and social participation. The forces involved in a collision or ball strike are the same regardless of the level of play, and the clinical consequences of an unprotected dental injury are identical.

Book your mouthguard appointment at CSSC

Protect your teeth — whether on the sporting field or during sleep. Book an appointment at Collins Street Specialist Centre for a thorough assessment and a custom-fitted mouthguard or night guard.

****Collins Street Specialist Centre**** Level 1, Manchester Unity Building 220 Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000 ****Phone:**** (03) 9654 6979
