

Oral Surgeon in Chicago Loop Promotes National Facial Protection Month

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Online PR News – 12-April-2012 – Chicago, IL - Dr. Steven Koos, owner of ORA® Oral Surgery & Implant Studio, a practice specializing in oral and [jaw surgery in the Chicago Loop](#) neighborhood of Chicago IL, is among a group of oral and maxillofacial surgeons nationwide that are promoting National Facial Protection Month this April. This promotional campaign is sponsored by the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons, the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and the American Association of Orthodontists on a national level, with more localized promotion by regional oral surgeons such as Dr. Koos, as well as other dental professionals.

The primary focus of Facial Protection Month is to make more people aware of the dangers that can result from not wearing helmets and mouthguards while engaged in sports-related activities. Injuries sustained when this protective gear is not worn can result in issues that send children and adults alike to emergency rooms or straight to the offices of oral and maxillofacial surgeons. Some of the most common injuries result in the need for these surgeons to provide treatment of facial bone trauma (such as treating broken noses - nasal bone fractures, broken cheek bones – zygomatic fractures, facial fractures –LeFort fractures, broken jaws – mandible fractures), facial soft tissue trauma treatment (such as lacerated tongues and lacerated lips) and dental trauma treatment (such as treating broken teeth, avulsed teeth, displaced teeth).

Dr. Koos is an oral and maxillofacial surgeon that is regularly called upon to perform facial trauma repair and [oral surgery in Downtown Chicago](#) due to injuries sustained while patients are engaged in sports without the proper protective gear for their head and face. "Many people think that they're immune to the types of serious injuries that people warn them about if they don't wear a helmet or mouthguard," explains Dr. Koos. "They take an 'it's not going to happen to me' attitude. Unfortunately, there's no predicting when an injury is going to occur and who it will affect. Oftentimes the results of an injury are even more devastating when you realize that the injury could've easily been prevented. I completely endorse a proactive injury prevention approach. Traumatic injuries occur in an instant, but can be devastating and take weeks to months to heal."

The statistics on the effectiveness of an effort as simple as wearing a mouthguard or helmet are hard to ignore, and it is up to [oral surgeons in Chicago](#) such as Dr. Koos, as well as medical and dental professionals nationwide, to spread the word and make people more aware of the effectiveness of this protective gear. And, there's certainly good reason to heed the advice being promoted by Chicago oral surgeons and others across the nation. The American Dental Association estimates that mouthguard usage can prevent over 200,000 oral injuries per year, while the National Youth Sports Foundation for Safety claims that athletes are sixty times more likely to sustain tooth damage when protective mouthguards are not worn. Unfortunately, however, only about a third of children engaged in organized sports wear mouthguards and only about a third of those that wear mouthguards in games will also utilize them during practice. Yet, over 60% of sports-related injuries happen during practices.

When it comes to helmet usage, a properly fitted helmet is estimated to prevent up to 45,000 head injuries and up to 55,000 facial injuries per year from bicycle accidents alone, according to Safe Kids USA. And wearing bicycle helmets can reduce the risk of head and brain injury by almost 90%. In addition to promoting the usage of helmets, medical and dental professionals are providing information to the public about the proper way to wear a helmet, including sizing, the fit of chin straps, and more.

While Dr. Koos' focus tends towards promoting the importance of mouthguards and face protecting shields in contact sports, since those are the primary injuries he comes into contact with as an oral and maxillofacial surgeon, he also makes sure to remind parents and kids alike how important it is to wear a good-fitting helmet. Even when it comes to mouthguard usage, the [Chicago Illinois jaw & oral surgeon](#) explains the importance of a proper fit. He explains that the most effective and comfortable mouthguards are custom-made to fit well over all teeth and cover gums, while allowing for normal breathing and speech. Store-bought "boil and bite" mouthguards do not offer the same level of protection or comfort, he further explains, although they are preferable to wearing nothing at all. Interestingly, custom performance mouth guards also have scientific research behind them demonstrating improvements in endurance, speed and strength.

"This spring, I will be sure to remind patients that visit my office about the importance of facial protection when engaging in sports," says Dr. Koos. "While it seems like it should be common sense, the statistics show that it is an uphill battle to keep these kids as safe as possible, but we're working on changing those statistics the best that we can."



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