

## GAA Mouthguard Regulations

This document highlights some FAQs regarding the compulsory wearing of mouthguards in Gaelic Football.

Studies have shown that the overall injury risk is close to twice as high when mouthguards are not worn, relative to when mouthguards are used during athletic activity. For in-depth background information on the new mouthguard regulations, go to:

<http://www.gaa.ie/medical-and-player-welfare/mouthguards/>



### 1. When does the new rule come into effect?

A. From January 1st 2013, all players playing in grades up to and including Minor will be required to wear a mouthguard in all Football Games and Football Practice Sessions.

### 2. When does the ruling come into effect for adult players?

A. From January 1st, 2014 all players at all grades will be required to wear a mouthguard in all football games and practice sessions.

### 3. What will happen if I am not wearing a mouthguard in a game?

A. If a player refuses to comply with a Referee's instruction to wear a mouthguard, he will initially be cautioned by the Referee and if the player continues to refuse, the Referee can send him off.

### 4. Who is responsible for ensuring mouthguards are worn at training or practice sessions?



A. In general, it is a matter for each Club to ensure the rule is adhered to at training or practice sessions. Clubs and players should note that players will not be covered under the Player Injury Scheme if they are not wearing a mouthguard.

### 5. Do players have to wear a mouthguard in Hurling games?

A. No. The new rule only applies to Football; however, wearing a mouthguard when playing Hurling does reduce the risk of dental injury.

### 6. I am a Minor playing on an adult team in 2013. Do I have to wear a mouthguard?

A. Not in 2013. The wearing of mouthguards in 2013 is compulsory at all age grades up to Minor. However, a player playing at Under 21 or adult level in 2013 is not required to wear a mouthguard under rule.

### 7. Our Club has a nursery, are children in these juvenile age groups exempt from wearing a mouthguard?

A. No. The Medical, Scientific & Welfare Committee advise that children should begin wearing a mouthguard at whatever age they start playing. Young mouths need protecting too and if players start wearing mouthguards at a young age this will add greatly to the development of a culture of wearing mouthguards in Gaelic Football.

### 8. Does this rule apply to Ladies Football?

The Ladies Gaelic Football Association has not announced plans to make the wearing of mouthguards compulsory in 2013. However, girls participating in GAA Grades up to and including Under 12 must wear a mouthguard as per Rial 4.3 Treoir Oifigiúil (T.O.) Part 2 2012. & Rial 6.16 T.O. Part 1 2012.

### 9. Does the new rule regarding the wearing of mouthguards apply to games in Primary Schools?

A. If an official GAA coach is coaching Gaelic games in primary schools then children must

wear a mouthguard to participate in the session. In terms of PE sessions, the GAA has no control over what activities or games teachers choose to deliver during PE lessons. However, we would advise that wearing mouthguards for Gaelic games will significantly reduce the risk of sustaining dental injuries.

**10. Who is responsible for enforcing the rule in Cumann na mBunscol Football Practice Sessions and Games?**

Cumann na mBunscol Náisiúnta are subject to the General Rules of the Association, it is a matter for each School to ensure that the rule is adhered to by their pupils in Practice Sessions and Football Games.

**11. Do I have to wear a mouthguard whilst playing Second Level games?**

A. Yes. From January 1st 2013, all Second Level players will be required to wear a mouthguard in all Football Games and Football Practice Sessions.

**12. Do I have to wear a mouthguard whilst playing Third Level games?**

A. Not in 2013. From January 1st 2014 all players at all grades must wear a mouthguard.

**13. Does this apply to overseas players?**

A. Yes. International Units are subject to the General Rules of the Association.

**14. I'm a referee; do I have to check all players' mouths before a game to ensure compliance?**

A. Referee's will not be expected to individually check players before a game; however, if a Referee notices that a player is not wearing a mouthguard, he should caution the player and if the player still refuses to wear one, he should be sent off.

**15. Which type of mouthguard should I purchase?**

A. The decision on which type of mouthguard a player should obtain is a matter of personal preference. 'Stock' and 'boil and bite' options are not generally recommended by dentists, however, they will suffice for compliance with the new rules if the product carries a CE (European Conformity) mark. There is no

doubt that custom-fitted mouthguards offer the best fit; however, teeth and mouths develop up until the age of 12 therefore young players can grow out of mouthguards over a period of time. Should a player feel that a mouthguard is not fitted properly, we would strongly recommend that advice is sought from a dental practitioner on an appropriate solution.

**16. I currently wear orthodontic braces, what are my options?**

A. It has been noted that children wearing orthodontic braces and wishing to play Gaelic football will be particularly concerned about the rule change; however, the GAA recommends that these players seek advice from a range of dental practitioners on the most appropriate solution for them.

**17. Is there an official GAA/GPA mouthguard?**

A. Yes, there is a full range of official OPRO GAA/GPA mouthguards available in bronze, silver, gold, platinum, and custom-fitted ranges. Official OPRO GAA/GPA 'boil and bite' mouthguards are available for purchasing through retailers: SuperValu, Centra, Lifestyle Sports, Elvery Sports, O'Neill's and Heatons. Custom-fitted mouthguards are available through a network of dentists nationwide.

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

If you have any medical or player welfare queries, contact us via:

**Telephone:** (0) 1 865 8685

**E-mail:** [playerwelfare@gaa.ie](mailto:playerwelfare@gaa.ie)

**Visit:** [www.gaa.ie/medical-and-player-welfare/mouthguards/](http://www.gaa.ie/medical-and-player-welfare/mouthguards/)

If you have any queries in relation to the purchase of official OPRO GAA/GPA mouthguards or the network of dentists, contact:

**E-mail:** [barry.cahill@gaa.ie](mailto:barry.cahill@gaa.ie)

**Visit:** [www.gaa.ie/mouthguards/](http://www.gaa.ie/mouthguards/)