

Wearing appropriate safety equipment, and wearing it correctly, is essential for reducing the risk of injury during sport and recreational activities⁴. The right protective gear helps cushion impacts and protect vulnerable areas of the body.

Protective equipment can include;

- Mouth guards
- Eye and face protection
- Helmets
- Clothing
- Footwear
- Wrist, elbow and knee guards
- Protective padding

Mouthguards

A mouthguard is a soft, cushioning device made from flexible material that fits snugly over the teeth². It helps protect the teeth, gums, lips, and jaw from injury during sport. A good mouthguard acts like a 'crash helmet' for the teeth and jaw by absorbing and spreading the force of a hit².

Anyone playing sports or games where there is a risk of being struck in the face should wear a well-fitted mouthguard. This is especially important in contact and collision sports such as:

- Football
- Basketball
- Netball
- Hockey
- Martial Arts

Young athletes should wear a mouthguard both while playing and training.

For more information visit Dental Health Services: www.dental.wa.gov.au/Publications/

Eye protection

Wearing well-fitting and comfortable eye protection is essential in sports where there is a risk of being hit by fast-moving balls or bats, or where accidental collisions with other players can occur.

Eye protection requirements vary depending on the sport:

- Cricket: Players should use helmets that include face shields or face guards that comply with BS 7928:2013 + A1:2019. This standard ensures the protective equipment meets safety requirements for impact and to prevent ball penetration through the faceguard.
- Squash, Tennis and Racquet ball: Players should wear eye protection that meets AS/NZS 18527.1:2022, which covers impact resistance. If playing outdoors, the eyewear should also include UV protection.
- Snow Sports: When participating in activities such as skiing or snowboarding, athletes should wear goggles that comply with AS/NZS 18527.2:2022, providing protection from both impact and UV exposure.

Eye protection is important for children with amblyopic (Lazy Eye). Glasses should be fitted with polycarbonate lenses, and prescription eye protection should replace regular prescription glasses for high-impact sports. Using the correct protective eyewear helps keep young athletes safe and supports full participation across a wide range of sports and activities.

Helmets

Hard helmets are essential in high-speed sports such as motorcycling and cycling, or sports with fast moving objects such as cricket and baseball³. Helmets should be specific to the sport being played and should be approved by the relevant sporting body. Soft or hard helmets do not protect against concussion.

Clothing & footwear

Clothing should be appropriate to weather conditions and sporting activity. When the UV is over 3 a long-sleeved, collared shirt, broad-brim or legionnaires' hat and sunglasses should be worn to protect yourself from the sun¹. Ensure shoes are well-fitting and specific to your sport rather than general running shoes.

Guards and padding

Protective guards and padding should be used where there is a high risk of falls, collisions or fast-moving objects. This includes wrist, elbow and knee guards, shin pads, shoulder padding, thigh pads.

Facilities

Playing fields and sporting facilities should be checked regularly by an appropriate person, such as the local council, official or club representative³. Damaged playing surfaces, fencing, lights, posts, padding, and rubbish should be identified to users and reported for repair before use³.

Soccer goals

Free-standing and movable soccer goals can tip over if they are not properly designed, anchored or installed. The following safety tips should be implemented when using movable soccer goals:

- Use fixed soccer goals whenever possible
- Ensure goals are manufactured in accordance with Australian Standards (AS 4866.1-2007)
- Secure goals with an appropriate anchoring system
- Goals should be tested by a club official before use. If unsure, do not use them until tested professionally
- Do not allow anyone to climb or swing on the goals
- Do not leave goals unattended
- Store away in a safe place when not in use



Basketball Rings

Basketball rings and backboards can be unsafe if they are fixed to the exterior of a building, such as a brick wall, roof rafters or above a door. When fixing to a wall or post, make sure it is strong enough to support it safely.

To reduce the risk of injury:

- Do not allow anyone to hang from the basketball ring or backboard
- No 'slam dunks' on home-installed basketball rings
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions when installing
- Do not mount a basketball ring or backboard to the outside of a building unless assessed by a structural engineer or architect
- Check the stability of the post, brickwork or other supporting structures regularly

For more information, visit the Australian Competition & Consumer Commission:

www.productsafety.gov.au

Using Safety Equipment

- Equipment should meet Australian Standards
- Protective equipment should always be worn at training and games
- Check equipment regularly and ensure it is well-maintained
- Protective equipment is NOT one size fits all. It should be appropriate for the sport, size, age and ability of the athlete
- Senior participants should always role model the correct use of protective equipment
- Consult your local sporting organisations or governing body for further details on using protective equipment in your sport.



1. Cancer Council WA. (n.d.). SunSmart. Retrieved from www.cancerwa.asn.au/cancer-prevention/sunsmart/

2. Dental Health Services (2021). Do You Need a Mouthguard? Retrieved from: www.dental.wa.gov.au/pdfs/IS150%20Do%20you%20need%20a%20mouthguard.pdf

3. Sports Medicine Australia (n.d.). Safety Guidelines for Children and Young People in Sport and Recreation. Retrieved from: www.sma.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/childrensafetyguidelines-fulldoc.pdf

4. SmartPlay (2021.). Protect Against Injury – Wear the Right Gear. Retrieved from SmartPlay Website: www.smartplay.com.au/protect-against-injury-wear-the-right-gear/

Kidsafe WA © 2026

Excerpts may be copied for educational purposes. Written permission is required to copy this fact sheet in its entirety.

For more information

www.kidsafewa.com.au

kidsafe@kidsafewa.com.au

(08) 6244 4880