

# Bite Plate vs Mouth Guard



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## Introduction

A bite plate is a dental appliance specifically made for a patient undergoing orthodontic treatment, where a specific orthodontic bite plate is made to repair incorrect biting habits such as overbites (This is when a patient's upper teeth overlap too much with their lower teeth). A Mouth guard on the other hand, is a dental device that helps cover and protect your teeth, tongue, gums and cheeks from any trauma that could be caused by direct contact sports such as rugby, boxing, biking or any other activities that increase your chances of mouth injuries to the teeth and soft tissue. A Mouth guard can also be made for a patient who grinds and clenches their teeth while either sleeping or stressed (Direct tooth on tooth contact). Bite Plates are patient specific and issued by an Orthodontist. Mouth guards and Bite plates used for grinding can be issued by a dentist, but can also be purchased over the counter.



## Types of Bite plates and Mouth guards

Bite Plates can be categorized into two devices. An Orthodontic Bite plate is designed as a small acrylic plate, which is clipped onto the upper teeth with metal clasps, this plate then prevents the teeth from touching when the mouth is closed. Orthodontic Bite plates may be fixed, which means they cannot be taken out of the mouth or removable. Removable bite plates must be worn throughout the day and only removed for cleaning, otherwise the teeth can move so much that the bite plate no longer fits. A normal dental bite plate, can also be called a Night Guard, this device is meant to be worn when a patient is a bruxer, the device will absorb the force when the patient begins grinding and clenching.

With Mouth guards, they are dental devices made to protect teeth from trauma that comes from sports like biking, rugby or any other athletic and contact activities, they can also be used as guards that are made for patients with bruxism or teeth grinding which can also be regarded as normal dental Bite-plates but are not made up of acrylic and metal clasps like the ones specialized for orthodontic care. These types of appliances serve different purposes and will look and feel different. Mouth guards come in different devices, patients can get a Custom-fitted mouth guard where their dentist uses a mould (impression) of their teeth to produce a custom-fitted mouth guard that comfortably fits their teeth and mouth. These kinds of mouth guards cost more, but they provide the best fit and protection. Then we have over the counter mouth guards that can either come as a Boil-and-bite or a One-size Fits All. With a Boil-and-bite, they are made up of a thermoplastic material that is softened by placing hot water. The softened mouth guard is then placed into the patients mouth, and using their fingers to press it onto the molars and front teeth. The device is then removed run under cool water to harden. The one-size-fits-all mouth guards can also be purchased over the counter and come preformed and ready to wear. The bulkiness and poor fit make them difficult to wear.



## Bite plate functions

There are many reasons as to why a patient may want to get a bite plate. The first can be for their orthodontic treatment. Through orthodontic treatment, it can be used on patients with a deep overbite, the lower incisors (front teeth) can come into constant contact with the upper gums, which may cause gum recession and damage to the roots of the upper teeth. With the help of a bite plate and orthodontic can correct this kind of bite, which can help boost confidence in children who are self-conscious about their teeth. The bite plate will help correct jaw and teeth alignment. This is essential for looking after teeth because crooked teeth can be hard to keep clean, which increases the risk of tooth decay and gum disease.

The second reason for why a patient would want to get a bite plate is because they suffer from bruxism, which is a condition where they grind and clench their teeth when they are asleep. This kind of bite plate can also be called a "Night Guard". This device will absorb the force when the patient begins grinding and clenching.

## Mouth Guard functions

There are a number of reasons as to why a patient may want to get a mouth guard. In most cases, patients are advised to get custom-fitted mouth guards, which are only available through a dental professional. However, due to the cost, one can always consider over the counter options such as a One-size-fits-all or boil-and-bite mouth guards. Repairing or replacing missing teeth can be costly and painful, therefore in order to prevent injury one can invest in wearing a mouth guard during athletic activities can help you avoid chipped or lost teeth, nerve damage to a tooth, soft-tissue damage to lips, gums, tongue and inside cheeks.



## References

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