



## LOCAL ORTHODONTIST PROMOTES SAFETY ON WHEELS

By DR. IRIS VARDY

I started in-line skating three years ago as a means of transportation to and from my residency in orthodontics at NYU and

heals in this asymmetric fashion, with unbalanced pressure to the joints, this can then transfer to pain and problems opening and closing the mouth.

I put myself on anti-inflammatory drugs (Advil/Motrin) and placed ice on the affected area. I also had a friend of mine



Dr. Iris Vardy (l) assisted the Olympic team with their mouthpieces and is now promoting wearing mouthguards while skating. She is shown here with Bethany Calcaterra McMahon (r) who was 12th in the Women's Single Luge at Lillehammer.

now I'm hooked. 'Blading is a blast and 'blading through the streets of Manhattan is like having an obstacle course right outside your door. However, it's definitely a dangerous game.

I bought my first helmet only after 2 1/2 years of being very lucky. Then, as luck would have it, two weeks later, while in Central Park training for my first race, I had a serious fall. Speeding in a tuck down a hill, my wheels started to wobble. Even though I was on my brand new Macroblade Equipe's, I was going too fast for four wheels. I fell — hands, knees, and face first. If it weren't for my wrist guards and helmet, which the fall took a big chunk out of, ... well... I don't know. At the emergency room at Mt. Sinai Hospital, I requested an X-ray of my jaw. I had knocked my chin so hard, that I was worried I had injured my TMJ joint.

Being an orthodontist, I've seen countless patients who had trauma to that joint and then suffered pain. I was terrified. A traumatic injury to one side of the jaw can knock it to the opposing side. If the jaw

look at my teeth, to make sure the middle of my teeth on the lower jaw, was coincident with the upper and midline of my face. This treatment along with making limited jaw movements (eating soft foods) helped. Just as with any injury, rest to the TMJ, was essential for healing. I'm lucky that I didn't knock my teeth out.

As a result of my experience, I've started constructing mouthguards for athletes. A mouthguard not only protects the teeth, but also protects the TMJ, by serving as a shock absorber. Since comfort is important, because in order for the mouthguard to be effective, it must be worn (obviously), mouthguards should be custom made. The mouthguards may be used as bleaching trays, but that depends on the individual and the status of his/her oral health.

When the NYRSA asked, I happily agreed to allow NYRSA members special privileges in support of "safety on wheels." For more information, please call: (212) 663-2269. **SKATE SAFE!**

