Another alternative embodiment is to have the first peg **50** integrally formed with the latch **40**. In this embodiment, the first peg **50** preferably will have a ball and socket fit with a hole in the anterior region **22** of the guard **20**. Any type of engagement that will allow the latch **40** to rotate (or move) about the engagement point of the first peg **50** with the guard **20** may replace the ball and socket fit.

Another alternative embodiment is to replace the second peg **52** with a locking head **52'** and the second latch end **404** with a serrated strap **404'** as illustrated in FIG. **14**. The locking head **52'** preferably includes a locking tang for engaging the serrations in the serrated strap **404'**. Preferably, the locking tang allows for insertion and removal of the serrated strap **404'** to allow for adjustment of the catheter relative to the invention.

While the illustrated securing device was described as fitting over a patient's lower teeth, it is instead possible for it to be mounted over the patient's upper teeth.

The securing device, the preferred illustrated embodiment and the various alternative embodiments, preferably does not have any portion, which extends to the exterior of a patient's mouth during use, so it is easy to keep the vicinity of the patient's mouth clear of bodily fluids or other types of contamination. The securing device is immobilized within the patient's mouth, so it is unnecessary to employ straps or tape on the exterior of the patient's head, which can cause discomfort to the patient and interfere with cleaning of the patient. The securing device also permits ready access to the interior of the patient's mouth after intubation so that the condition of the patient's mouth can be observed and the accumulation of fluids within the patient's mouth can be prevented. Furthermore, the securing device leaves ample room within the oral cavity for additional instruments to be inserted.

The preferred and alternative embodiments described above may be combined in a variety of ways with each other.

Although the present invention has been described in terms of particular preferred and alternative embodiments, it is not limited to those embodiments. Alternative embodiments, examples, and modifications which would still be encompassed by the invention may be made by those skilled in the art, particularly in light of the foregoing teachings.

Those skilled in the art will appreciate that various adaptations and modifications of the preferred and alternative embodiments described above can be configured without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention. Therefore, it is to be understood that, within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practiced other than as specifically described herein.

What is claimed is:

1. A device for securing a catheter within a mouth of a patient comprising:

a guard having
an anterior region, and
two posterior regions, and

a latch in communication with said guard, and

a wedge connected to said guard and extending from one of said posterior regions; and

wherein each of said posterior regions abuts said anterior region, and said posterior regions are spaced from each other.

2. The device as claimed in claim **1**, wherein said latch is mounted on said guard for rotation between an open position and a closed position.

3. A device for securing a catheter within a mouth of a patient comprising:

a guard having
an anterior region, and
two posterior regions, and

a latch in communication with said guard said latch has a first end rotatably connected to said guard and a second end detachably engagable with said guard; and

wherein each of said posterior regions abuts said anterior region, and said posterior regions are spaced from each other.

4. The device according to claim **1**, wherein said latch includes an end with a ball, and said guard having a socket for receiving said ball of said latch.

5. The device according to claim **1**, wherein said guard includes a channel framed by two side walls and a wall connecting said two side walls such that said walls are in each of said anterior and two posterior regions.

6. The device for securing a catheter within a mouth of a patient comprising:

a guard having
an anterior region,
two posterior regions,
a channel framed by two side walls and a wall connecting said two side walls such that said walls are in each of said anterior and two posterior regions, and
a soft material lining at least said connecting wall within the channel,

a latch in communication with said guard, and

a wedge connected to said guard; and

wherein each of said posterior regions abuts said anterior region, and said posterior regions are spaced from each other.

7. The device according to claim **1**, further comprising a shield connecting said two posterior regions of said guard together.

8. A device for securing a catheter within a mouth of a patient comprising:

a guard having
an anterior region, and
two posterior regions, wherein each of said posterior regions abuts said anterior region, and said posterior regions are spaced from each other,

a latch in communication with said guard, and a wedge extending from said guard, and

wherein said guard includes a first post and a second post, said first post is in communication with said latch.

9. The device according to claim **8**, wherein said latch engages said second post.

10. The device according to claim **8**, wherein said first post and said second post are spaced in said anterior region.

11. The device according to claim **8**, wherein said latch includes an arcuate portion.

12. The device according to claim **11**, wherein said wedge extends from said guard in one of said two posterior regions.

13. The device according to claim **1**, further comprising: a second guard having an anterior region and two posterior regions, said first wedge connecting said guard and said second guard together in one of said posterior regions, and a second wedge connecting said guard and said second guard together in the other of said posterior regions.

14. A method of securing a catheter within a patient's mouth using the device of claim **1** comprising:

covering a plurality of a patient's teeth with the guard disposed in the patient's mouth;