

CONSERVATIVE TMD TREATMENT (TMD = Temporomandibular Disorders)

TMD is a broad classification of joint dysfunction and/or pain. It is not a diagnosis, nor is it the same as bruxism (clenching/grinding). TMD may be caused by trauma, parafunctional habits (grinding, clenching, cheek/nail biting etc.), which may be due to poor occlusion; psychosocial factors (stress) or systemic disorders (arthritis, fibromyalgia).

A bite guard and/or bite adjustment are two treatment modalities, yet some relief may be found with alterations in diet and routine. Below are some options we recommend as indicated. Please call if you have any increase in symptoms or pain.

- Avoid chewy foods such as French and rye bread, bagels, meat and hard foods such as candy and ice. **DO NOT CHEW GUM.**
- Maintain a soft diet including pastas and proteins such as eggs, chicken and fish.
- Make sure your teeth touch only when speaking, chewing and swallowing. At rest your lips are closed and your teeth are approximately 1/8 inch apart.
- Maintain proper posture. Do not hold a phone between your ear and shoulder or lean on your hand while resting/watching TV.
- Apply moist heat (hot washcloths) to your lower jaw muscles (both sides of face in front of ears) for _____min, _____times a day.
- Massage your lower jaw muscles for _____min, _____ times a day.
- Have a professional massage of your head, neck and shoulders _____times a month.
- Avoid strenuous exercise 2 hours before bedtime.
- Avoid caffeine 4 hours before bedtime.
- Drink only water 2 hours before bedtime.
- Take a hot shower or bath before bedtime.
- Take deep slow breaths and think about your favorite vacation spot.
- Sleep on your back to take the pressure off your jaw muscles.
- RELAX