



DEALING WITH TMD (Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction)

Temporomandibular joint dysfunction includes a wide spectrum of signs and symptoms. These signs and symptoms occur when the joint that connects the lower jaw to the upper does not function smoothly. This can occur as a single episode or become chronic. Evaluation and treatment is time-intensive, and no single therapy or drug regimen has shown to be universally effective.

Causes:

- ❖ Traumatic injury to the jaw or face
- ❖ Arthritis
- ❖ Stress
- ❖ Clenching or grinding
- ❖ Abnormal bite (malocclusion)

Signs and Symptoms:

- ❖ Pain in or around the ear or jaw
- ❖ Headache, neck ache or shoulder pain
- ❖ Clicking or popping in the jaw joint upon opening or closing
- ❖ Locking of the jaw in an open or closed position
- ❖ Restriction of lower jaw movement

Treatment:

What you can do at home:

- ❖ Moist heat application to the affected area for 15-20 minutes, 4-6 times a day
- ❖ Choose a soft diet; avoid chewing gum, hard or sticky foods, and foods that require you to open wide
- ❖ Reduce stress
- ❖ Ibuprofen or Naproxen
- ❖ Wear a soft athletic mouth guard at night to reduce stress of the joint in the case of clenching or grinding
- ❖ Muscle relaxants

If further treatment is needed, a referral to the following specialist may be indicated:

- ❖ Oral and maxillofacial surgeon
- ❖ Orthodontist
- ❖ Chiropractor
- ❖ Physical Therapist