

### Your self help guide

Try to limit your jaw movements (such as wide yawning and gum chewing), eat soft foods in small bite sized mouthfuls. pain killers, moist heat and applying ice can sometimes help reduce your symptoms.

### What can your dentist do to help?

The most common treatment is to use a removable plastic appliance called a **'splint'**. They can be used for the diagnosis and treatment of a TMD.

There are different types of splints which can be worn on the upper or lower teeth. They are designed to relax the muscles and support jaw joints in different ways.

They are usually worn at night time when much of the damage occurs.

The number of appointments needed varies depending upon the type of problem. Your dentist will be able to advise you regarding this.

The position of the teeth can interfere with healthy jaw movements. If this is diagnosed as the cause of the TMD, one or more of the following may also be recommended:

#### Equilibration

Balancing of the bite by minimal grinding and/or bonding of tooth coloured filling material.

#### Restorative dentistry

Crowns, veneers, onlays, implants, dentures.

#### Orthodontic treatment

Braces.



If you feel that you may have a TMD or a bite problem please email us: [info@BSOS.org.uk](mailto:info@BSOS.org.uk)



# Headaches, jaw problems and your bite

# TMD and Occlusion



## What is TMD (TemporoMandibularDisorder)?

TMD is a term that covers a variety of problems associated with the jaw joints, chewing muscles and your bite. We call jaw joints Temporomandibular Joints. You have two of these located either end of your lower jaw just in front of your ears.



Your jaw is in constant use over a lifetime and like any part of your body can go wrong. When it does, dentists call this TMD.

## TMD

TMD is a blanket term that covers a wide variety of problems associated with the jaw joint, muscles of the head and neck and your bite.

Problems can occur on one or both sides, can be intermittent or constant and may include:

- Headaches, neck aches and face pain.
- Worn or broken teeth.
- Clicking or grinding sensation in the jaw joint.
- Difficulty opening, closing or chewing.
- Disturbed sleep.

## What causes TMD?

There are many causes, often involving more than one of the following:

- Trauma e.g. a blow to the jaw, or whiplash.
- Bite problems. How the upper and lower teeth fit together (occlusion) can interfere with healthy jaw movements.
- Clenching and grinding of the teeth can cause injury to the jaw joints.
- Stress/anxiety increases tension in the muscles and the intensity of clenching/grinding.
- Arthritis and other medical conditions.



**'Your jaw undergoes a tremendous amount of use.'**

## Clenching and grinding (Bruxism).

The habits of clenching or grinding of the teeth are very common. Many people are totally unaware of their habit until it is observed by their dentist.

Although it is most common at night time, many people will clench or grind their teeth during the day. Stress tends to increase the intensity.

Huge forces can be generated by the habit, in addition to causing TMD it can cause:

- Sensitive teeth.
- Broken/chipped teeth or fillings.
- Worn teeth.
- Loss of the bone supporting the teeth.
- Drifting/movement of teeth.

There is a higher risk of problems such as broken fillings and crowns in patients who grind their teeth. Anyone who clenches or grinds would benefit by wearing a "bite splint" at night time to protect their teeth.

## Who treats TMD Disorder?

Dentists who have undertaken appropriate training should coordinate your care. They may refer you to other specialities like Chiropractors, Physiotherapists, Osteopaths, Doctors for additional care.