

## TMD

### TEMPEROMANDIBULAR DISORDER/PAIN

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#### *What is the TMJ?*

The temporomandibular joint connects the lower jaw to the bone at the side of the head, located in front of the ear .

#### SYMPTOMS OF TMD:

- ◆ Clicking, popping or grating sounds in the joint
- ◆ Pain at the joint site and/or when opening and closing the mouth
- ◆ Earaches
- ◆ Headaches
- ◆ Limited ability to open the mouth
- ◆ Pain when chewing

#### CAUSES:

- ◆ Grinding the teeth at night (bruxism)
- ◆ Trauma/injury
- ◆ Stress triggering pain in the jaw muscles, spasm in the jaw muscles from clenching the teeth
- ◆ Arthritis
- ◆ Displacement or dislocation of a disc that is located between the jawbone and the jaw socket

#### DIAGNOSIS:

The diagnosis is made by history and physical exam. Unless the provider finds something unusual in the exam, most patient will not need xrays.

#### TREATMENT:

- ◆ Avoid sleeping on your jaw. Sleeping on your back enables your jaw to relax.
  - ◆ Application of ice pack or bag of frozen peas and massage of the area at least twice a day for 10 minutes. Do not put the ice directly on your skin .
  - ◆ Heat applied may help also.
  - ◆ Avoid chewy or hard foods. Avoid chewing gum or cracking ice. Eat soft foods.
  - ◆ Avoid clenching your teeth. Many people clench

their teeth when they are stressed or drive. Become aware of stressful situations that cause you to clench your teeth.

- ◆ OTC anti-inflammatory medication, such as ibuprofen or Alleve®. Take only as directed on the label.
- ◆ Avoid extreme jaw movements, such as wide yawning .
- ◆ A referral to an oral surgeon may be made if the above recommendations do not help. One mode of treatment that may be recommended is a bite plates/splint , special devices that fit in your mouth to keep you from grinding your teeth at night.
- ◆ Stress management counseling may be recommended.

For further information:

<http://nidcr.nih.gov/oralhealth/Topics/TMJ>