

TMJ Orthopedic Splint Instructions

Since the TMJ problems and treatment you are to receive are partially orthopedic in nature, we have fabricated an orthopedic jaw repositioning appliance for your benefit. The appliance will assist the jaw-joint, muscles, and ligaments to relax and function more normally. Pressure will be reduced in the joint area and adverse habits such as clenching or bruxing will be discouraged. **This appliance will also enable us to learn more about your problem and your true jaw position by allowing the muscles and joint to determine where your jaw opens and closes without the influence of the teeth.**

1. Full-time wear is most important. During the first few days, you can wear it for an hour or two with short intervals of rest until you become adjusted to it. You must wear the appliance while eating...There are no exceptions!!
2. First days in splint. Read out loud a few minutes daily to become comfortable with speech. You will notice increased saliva flow for a few days. Food tastes may be temporarily altered. You may feel slightly nervous or awkward at first. These feelings will go away. **Your teeth may be sore for several days.** If needed, you may take aspirin, Tylenol, or ibuprofen. If any areas of tissue irritation result, please call the office to have the splint adjusted.
3. Diet Modification. A softer diet is necessary and important, i.e., eggs, chicken, fish, ground beef, soups, nutritional cereals, salads (without hard vegetables such as raw carrots, celery, cauliflower, etc.), casseroles, juices, steamed vegetables, soft fruit, etc. **Avoid foods requiring wide opening and hard chewing** such as steak, raw vegetables, apples, hard-crust breads and bagels, chew candy such as **gum**, taffy, caramel, Tootsie Rolls, gummy bears, Starbursts.

Cut all foods into small bite-sized pieces and avoid opening your mouth wider than the thickness of your thumb.

4. Appliance Cleaning. Cleaning of your appliance is best accomplished by brushing it thoroughly with your toothbrush and toothpaste. Do this after every meal. Your appliance can occasionally be soaked in mouthwash or a denture cleaner such as Polident or Efferdent. *Do not use HOT water. This may warp your appliance, and affect the fit.*
5. **Do Not Allow Your Teeth To Touch** when your appliance is out of your mouth for cleaning. Keep in mind that we do not want your teeth to determine where your jaw opens and closes.

Your bite may change as your jaw position changes; therefore, future adjustments to your splint may be necessary and additional therapy such as orthodontics (braces), equilibration (grinding) of your teeth, a second type of splint or even surgery may be recommended.

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