

Hobart Orofacial Pain and Special Needs Clinic

YOUR NEW TMJD APPLIANCE

Please keep this sheet handy. It contains important information for you and your new appliance

Purpose – The orthotic / splint that has been made for you has been designed with several very specific principles and purposes.

There are literally hundreds of different designs and materials that can be used to make a splint. Those made by most general dentists are typically called "Full Coverage Flat Plane" splints. They are designed to cover all the upper teeth and when a patient bites together, all the lower teeth touch.

These types of splints protect the teeth from grinding when asleep but do nothing more for the patient and do not address other problems such as chronic muscle fatigue of the face and neck, headaches, and poor sleep patterns as the person can still clench at maximal effort whilst asleep. In addition, often a ramp is placed on the front of the splint to provide 'canine teeth guidance'. Many of these splints can actually cause a significant worsening of the jaw problem, pain, and increase in clenching.

The most important part of your new splint is that it will hold and stabilise your jaw in a natural, relaxed and orthopaedic position.

That means the upper and lower jawbones, and muscles of your head and neck are aligned correctly to make your TM joints function as well as possible and prevent muscle fatigue whilst you sleep. It also 'decompresses' the jaw joints so they are able to recover from the heavy forces of sleep bruxism.

Orthotics/splints for Sleep Bruxism and TMJ Disorders made at our clinic are designed to help alleviate:

- Jaw pain, soreness, and stiffness
- Headaches (pain)
- Muscle Fatigue
- Neck stiffness
- Improve sleep quality
- Protect your muscles and teeth from clenching and grinding
- Open the airway and reduce snoring

The orthotic / splint also works as a 'biofeedback' device to "remind your brain" and thereby help alleviate and break the cycle of clenching and / or grinding.

Your splint(s) may cause you to salivate more for a few days to a week or two and may cause your teeth to be slightly sensitive to cold and / or pressure. This is normal and generally subsides once you become accustomed to wearing the appliance.

GENERAL CARE

Whilst your splint will help alleviate and correct many of the symptoms you present with such as ear pain, jaw pain, headaches, lack of sleep, etc, it is VERY important that you continue to follow the simple exercises and awareness techniques as outlined in the **TMJ SELF HELP STRATEGIES** hand out sheet you were given at your first appointment. Reduction of daytime clenching habits is EXTREMELY important long term.

The most important things you can do for yourself during the day are:

- DO NOT clench your teeth together or hold tension in your jaw, face, neck, and shoulder muscles.

- Posture - At work, at home, driving in the car, etc ALWAYS take notice of correct posture. This reduces muscle fatigue in the face, neck, and shoulders considerably.
- Sleep - Continue to observe good sleep hygiene measures as described on our web-site and includes caffeine and stimulant reduction **6 hours before** bed times.

DIRECTION FOR WEAR

Bruxism Orthotic – To be worn every night and anytime you go to sleep. This includes any naps you may have during the day.

CLEANING AND MAINTENANCE

Your orthotics / splints are like a sponge. It is very porous and will collect plaque like your teeth do.

Oral hygiene (brushing and flossing) are extremely important and the cleaner you keep your teeth before bed and during the day, the longer your orthotics / splints will last.

NIGHT SPLINT - On waking, go straight to the bathroom and remove your night splint. Rinse it under water and using your toothbrush and some soap or toothpaste, give it a light scrub all over. Rinse it well and place it back in your case.

Orthotics constructed with a soft lining will often discolour. This is normal as the silicon absorbs bacteria, which then stain the lining. As long as the appliance is cleaned regularly as per the instructions, it will last for several years.

Weekly Cleaning – Your night bruxism appliance should be regularly soaked once a week in an effervescent cleaner i.e. Polydent, Sterident or 1:10 solution of bleach to water such as White King or Miltons. This helps remove tartar and bacteria build up within the porous structure of the appliances. If your appliance develops an odour, it is time to give it a soak.

Polydent / Sterident denture cleaning tables work extremely well, and you should leave the appliance soaking all day (ignore the 10min time on the packet instructions). Wash appliance thoroughly on removal from solution prior to wearing.

Wear and Tear - Over a couple of months or years, your splint may wear down from normal use and you may experience a return of some symptoms. That is why it's important that you return for regular reviews even if you are feeling 'ok' so we can check your appliance and 'reline' it if needed.

- Some people will wear down their splint every few months, whilst others it might take a year or two. Hence, relines and repairs will be carried out on an 'as needed' basis at minimal laboratory costs only.

Regular Dental Checkups - It is very important that you attend your general dentist for regular 6 or 12 monthly checkups to prevent dental decay and monitor your general oral health.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to call our office on **03 6237 0766**, ask at your next consultation, or visit our web-site at www.tmjtreatment.com.au

Copies of this form are also available as a download from our website.

Happy sleeping...!

Dr Tony Eldridge

