

PREVENTION TIPS

DONT's:

- Do not eat any food that requires prolonged chewing (hard crusts of breads, bagels, tough meats or popcorn).
- Do not eat hard "crunchy" food (peanuts, corn nuts and raw vegetables) or chew on ice cubes.
- Do not chew gum.
- Do not bite into foods with your front teeth.
- Do not move your jaw in such a way that it causes the joint to make clicking, popping or grinding sound.
- Do not bite your fingernails, cheeks, lips or chew on pencils or pens.
- Do not protrude your lower jaw forward when applying lipstick, eating or talking.
- Do not rest your jaw on your hand.
- If you wear a dental splint, do not play with it with your tongue.
- Do not clench or grind your teeth. Keep your lips together but your teeth apart.

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TEMPOROMANDIBULAR JOINT DISORDER (TMD)

WHAT IS TMD?

Temporomandibular joint disorder (TMD) is a common condition that affects movement of the jaw. Your temporomandibular joint (TMJ) is a hinge type joint that connects your jaw with your skull allowing you to move your jaw up and down to chew, yawn, and talk.

Problems with the jaw and the muscles are called temporomandibular joint disorders (TMD). Some people refer to this as TMJ, however that is just the name of the joint. TMD is not usually serious and can get better on its own.



CAUSES

This disorder may be the result of a combination of the following factors:

- Teeth grinding or clenching.
- Injuries to the jaw.
- Arthritis in the jaw.
- Malocclusion (an uneven bite or when your teeth do not fit together as they should).
- Stress.
- Normal wear and tear.

COMMON SYMPTOMS

- Jaw or facial pain
- Stiffness in your jaw
- Difficulty opening or closing your mouth
- Your jaw locking when you open your mouth
- Jaw joint clicking or popping
- Difficulties eating
- Headaches
- Earaches or toothaches

WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

See your doctor if you experience any of the following:

- You are unable to eat or drink.
- You have clicking or popping noises when you move your jaw.
- You have difficulty opening your mouth or if Your jaw is locking.
- You have frequent or severe headaches.
- You have pain around your jaw, ear or the side of your head.

TREATMENT OPTIONS

Your doctor may recommend the treatment below:

- Medication such as anti-inflammatories, painkillers, or muscle relaxants.
- Heat or cold packs.
- Physiotherapy.
- Custom splints or night guards.
- Relaxation strategies to reduce stress.

If the issues persist, you may be referred to a specialist to discuss painkiller injections or jaw surgery.

PREVENTION TIPS

DO's:

- Do breathe through your nose if able, not through your mouth.
- Do rest your tongue against the roof of your mouth for greatest relaxation of your jaw muscles.
- Do maintain good posture (keep your head in the midline over your shoulders).
- If it is painful to open your mouth to brush your teeth, do try using a child's toothbrush.
- Do sleep on your back with a thin pillow under your head and a small towel under your neck.
- Do try to limit opening your mouth to a thumb's thickness when yawning, laughing, coughing, sneezing or singing.
- Do cut your food into small, bite-size pieces to prevent opening your mouth too wide.
- When in stressful situations, do utilize stress management techniques to prevent unproductive tensing of your jaw, face and neck muscles.
- Do choose soft foods.