

TEMPOROMANIBULAR (TMJ) DISORDERS HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

We have begun to help you with your temporomandibular joint/muscle dysfunction. Your success will depend in large part upon the way you treat these injured areas. Resolution and healing will be enhanced by the following:

- For the next few months, be sure to cut all foods into small, bite sized pieces and try to avoid opening your mouth excessively wide.
- Should you find yourself bruxing or clenching your teeth together, try to remember to keep your “lips together and your teeth apart.”
- Make every effort not to strain your joint ligaments unnecessarily. Try not to eat hard crusts of bread, tough meat, raw vegetables, or other foods which will require prolonged chewing.
- Avoid chewing gum during this period of treatment.
- Always try to open your jaw in the hinge or arc motion. Try not to excessively protrude your jaw, as you must do when biting off a piece of bread.
- Try to breathe through your nose at all times, hold your head upright and shoulders back, and keep your teeth apart.
- Try to sleep on your back. If you must sleep on your side, ensure adequate pillow support between your shoulder and head. Do not sleep on your jaw. Support your neck with an appropriately shaped pillow if necessary.
- Try to maintain a well-rounded diet. If you feel you may have insufficient vitamin intake, begin taking a multivitamin supplement.
- Realize that jaw/muscle problems can be related to stress plus injury or abnormality.

Reduction of internal tension and external stress in your life will be of great benefit. These few simple rules can easily allow you to modify your lifestyle and eating habits and to void those jaw movements which might reinjure your joints, muscles or ligaments. In doing so, your treatment may be significantly enhanced and your healing process accelerated.