



MANAGEMENT OF TMJ (Temporal-Mandibular Joint) PAIN

1) take **ANTI-INFLAMMATORY** medications (i.e. - Ibuprofen, Advil, Motrin, Aleve, NSAIDS)

- an anti-inflammatory will help reduce the joint pain
- take medications according to manufacturer's specifications and read the label
- make sure you are not allergic or contra-indicated to the medication
- stronger medications can be prescribed later, if symptoms persist, but these are usually a good starting point to control the pain

2) apply **WARM COMPRESSES** to BOTH joints

- the application of warm (NOT scolding hot), moist towels to the joints will also help reduce inflammation, and help reduce discomfort; please read* on...

*This process will help increase the circulation of blood to the effected joint and disc, which has minimal circulation to begin with. Increasing the circulation will also reduce the build-up of lactic acid in the muscles. Just like all of the other muscles in your body, if one is over-used, then it feels very sore. Relate this to an over-used muscle of your jaw due to grinding, clenching, etc. and then you feel discomfort approximating the TMJ.

3) eat a **SOFTER DIET**

- maintain healthy nutrition, but just avoid foods that are tough, crunchy, or chewy to eat
- good examples of softer foods are: scrambled eggs, mashed potatoes, applesauce, yogurt, and nutritional milkshakes

4) **MUSCLE MESSAGES** and **EXERCISES**

- manipulate the muscles and joint by gently rubbing the areas just in front of the ears
- gradually open and close your mouth at the same time you are rubbing the area
- just like rubbing sore muscles after you have exercised, this will also improve circulation

5) **BITE ADJUSTMENT**

- you can't do this one on your own, you'll need a little help from us, but please read* on ...

*Sometimes little indiscrepancies occur in the way your teeth come together, and your teeth may need to be adjusted in order to correct this. This adjustment is called "occlusal equilibration," which is a fancy term for when we lightly reduce the outer surface of the tooth with the handpiece. What we try to achieve is a level of guidance and harmony in the way your teeth come together. These adjustments are usually minimal, do not require anesthesia, and instant relief is experienced in some cases. A series of adjustments may be required in order for the bite to become stabilized.

6) **NIGHT/DAY GUARD APPLIANCE**

- relief may only ultimately come from the use of an appliance that you can wear on your teeth during the day and/or night
- once again, you'll need some help with this one, but please read* on ...

*The appliance is made from a clear, tough material that is specifically fabricated to withstand the forces of your teeth. It is also designed to create an "ideal" guidance of your teeth, as mentioned above (#5). These forces can be very destructive to the joints, muscles, and teeth. Sometimes an appliance is the only way to ultimately control all of these forces, even with compliance of the above mentioned remedies. An appliance is fabricated from models, which are made from impressions taken of your teeth. These models are then sent to a laboratory where the appliance is actually made. Your dentist will then make proper adjustments for the nightguard to fit comfortably, as well as function properly.

