

SELF-MANAGEMENT FOR TMJ AND JAW PAIN

Try the following recommendations to reduce your TMJ and jaw pain:

1. **USE HOT OR COLD PACKS** Apply moist heat, ice, or a combination of both to the painful areas. Most people prefer heat, but if it increases the pain, try ice alone or a combination of both ice and heat.
 - Apply moist heat for 20 minutes – four or more times per day. Warm a wet washcloth in the microwave, squeeze out excess water and apply to affected areas.
 - Apply cold pack for 10 minutes-Place crushed ice in a bag, wrap the bag in a wet washcloth and apply to affected areas for about ten minutes (until mild numbness achieved) and remove. Can be applied four or more times per day.
 - Use a combination of heat and cold packs four or more times per day. Apply heat for ten minutes, and then follow with ten minutes of ice pack.
2. **EAT SOFT FOODS** Avoid hard or chewy foods. I.e. carrots, bagels, or steak. Cut all food into small bites. Chewing gum should be avoided.
3. **REST JAW MUSCLES** Keep your teeth apart and practice good posture.
 - When you are not chewing, your teeth should not touch except during swallowing.
 - Closely monitor your jaw position for signs of clenching.
 - Try placing the tip of your tongue lightly behind your upper front teeth allowing your back teeth to separate and relax your jaw muscles.
 - Good head, neck, and back posture help you maintain good jaw posture. Try to hold your head up straight, and use a small pillow or rolled towel to support your lower back when sitting.
 - Avoid habits such as resting your jaw on your hand and cradling the telephone against your shoulder.
4. **AVOID CAFFEINE** Caffeine stimulates your muscles to contract and become more tense.
5. **WATCH HABITS** Avoid any habits that put a strain on your jaw muscles and joints. I.e. clenching, grinding, touching or resting teeth together. Biting cheeks or lips, pushing your tongue against teeth or tensing your jaw.
6. **SLEEP SMART** Avoid sleeping habits that strain jaw muscles or joints. The best Sleep position for your jaw is on your back. If sleeping on your side use a thick Enough pillow to support your neck. Do not sleep on your stomach!
7. **DO NOT OPEN WIDE** Until pain is reduced avoid activities that involve opening your jaw wide. I.e. yawning, yelling and prolonged dental appointments.
8. **ONLY USE RECOMMENED MEDICATIONS** Avoid medications with caffeine I.e. Anacin, Excedrin or Vanquish.

IF PAIN INCREASES OR PERSISTS PLEASE CALL US:

Broadlands Family Dentistry

(303) 460-8700