



USE AND CARE OF YOUR OCCLUSAL SPLINT

Your occlusal splint is prescribed for your temporomandibular disorder. It is designed to:

- ◆ relieve your jaw muscle tension,
- ◆ decrease painful symptoms,
- ◆ protect your teeth, new crowns and bridges from sleep grinding/clenching and
- ◆ maintain your teeth in position.

The following information will help you use your splint correctly:

- Normally your splint should be worn at night time only. Your splint can be worn during waking hours at times when you are prone to clenching your teeth if it is a full arch splint. This may happen during periods of mental concentration or stress.
- Your splint serves as a physical reminder not to clench during these times. When performing rigorous physical exercises, it is recommended that your splint be worn and this will prevent uneven loading of your jaw during clenching.
- Some will find their occlusal splints useful in relieving headaches and tinnitus (ringing noise in the ear).
- At first you may be aware of an increase in the amount of saliva in your mouth when wearing your splint. This is normal and will disappear with use.
- When placed in your mouth, your splint may feel tight on your teeth for a short time but your teeth should not hurt.
- The most comfortable position for your jaw at night is usually different to the jaw position where your upper and lower teeth fit together during the day.

Your splint allows your jaw to relax to this comfortable position during sleep. Therefore when your splint is removed upon waking, your “bite” may feel different. This is common. However, when your teeth are brought together, your jaw “wakes up” and your bite will soon return to its “habit position” where they fit together for normal function.

Cleaning and care

- ✚ The splint must be stored against moisture to preserve the plastic. This can be done with a moist tissue in a plastic container. However, do not wrap the splint in the tissue as this can lead to fungal growth.
- ✚ The splint should be brushed with a toothbrush, soap and water before and after use.
- ✚ Do not use toothpaste to clean your splint as the sand particles in toothpaste will damage the plastic.
- ✚ Cleaning should be done over a basin of water or a towel so your splint will not break if you happen to drop it.
- ✚ Never use hot water on your splint during cleaning as the heat will warp the plastic.
- ✚ Adjustments of your splint are always necessary and the number needed will depend on the nature, complexity, and severity of your temporomandibular disorder, as well as the splint design.

Important

- If your splint is not used, symptoms may return or become worse.
- In addition to splint therapy, bite correction of your teeth may be necessary to provide a more effective and long-lasting result. This can be decided during the course of your treatment.

Your splint should be worn:

- night time only indefinitely (do not wear more than 8 hours continuously)
- night time only at specified times (do not wear more than 8 hours continuously)
- night time only on alternate nights (do not wear more than 8 hours continuously)
- during the day at specified times
- day and night continuously for _____
- other: _____

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