

Post-Operative Instructions for Occlusal Guards & TMD Self-Care Tips

Oral Appliance Delivery Acknowledgement

I have just had my full coverage oral appliance delivered and acknowledge the following:

- The appliance is made to protect and stabilize my jaw muscles, joints, and teeth.¹
- The appliance is to be worn only at night except when working out with weights or when taking a nap.
- My bite on the appliance is even on both sides.
- Each morning I need to check my bite without the appliance and confirm that I can bring my teeth together so that my bite is the same as it is today.
- I will immediately schedule an appointment with Dr. _____ if I notice that my bite, with or without the appliance, is not the same as today.
- Dr. _____ is the only person who can adjust the appliance.
- I need to bring my appliance to every future appointment I have with Dr. _____
- After taking my appliance out in the morning, I should brush the appliance with a toothbrush using only water, or mouthwash, to clean it.
- I should not use toothpaste to clean the appliance since it is abrasive and can scratch the appliance.
- About once a week, I should soak my appliance for a few hours with the biting surface face down in either a denture cleanser such as Efferdent or in white vinegar to remove any tarter deposits that could build up on the appliance. Brush the appliance well after soaking. The amount of time the appliance is soaking is not critical.
- The appliance should never be placed in hot water.
- The appliance needs to be in one or two places, either in my mouth or in the case dry.
- If I have pets, I have been informed that the appliance must be kept in a safe place away from where my pet can find the appliance since many pets, especially dogs, like to use the appliance as a chew toy.
- My appliance should be checked by Dr. _____ one month after delivery, three months, and then every six months thereafter.
- I acknowledge I have been given my plaster models, which I need to keep in a safe place and bring with me in case my appliance breaks, and it can be repaired or replaced. If I have the models, it will save me the cost of an office visit.
- Any dental treatment (such as fillings, crowns) may cause the occlusal guard to not fit properly and the guard may have to be replaced. I am responsible for the replacement fees.

_____ (Patient Name)

_____ (Patient Signature)

_____ (Date)

Courtesy of Rich Hirschinger, DDS MBA. Board-certified Orofacial Pain Specialist. Inventor of gentle jaw ®

Athletic Mouthguard Post-Operative Instructions

- WHEN TO WEAR
 - Always wear when playing sports.
- CLEANING
 - Wash daily in cold or room temperature water. Do not wash in hot water.
 - Rinse with mouthwash to improve taste.
- STORING
 - Store in a container dry when not in use. Keep it out of the heat.
 - Keep the container away from pets as dogs will use the mouthguard as a chew toy.

- WEAR AND TEAR
 - Inspect regularly for any distortions, splits, or perforations. If detected, a new mouthguard will have to be made for your protection.⁶

TMD Self-Care Tips (Adjunctive Treatment)

Recommended in conjunction with the occlusal appliance.

- EXERCISES
 - Jaw stretching with the Gentle Jaw (www.gentlejaw.com)
 - Exercise 20-30 minutes 3-4 times a day with cardiovascular low impact exercises and/or weight training. For weight training, limit overhead lifting if you experience neck symptoms.
- MASSAGE
 - Your jaw and temple muscles especially where you feel tight bands
- RELAX
 - Participate in relaxing activity each day.
- BREAK HABITS
 - Break parafunctional habits (e.g. clenching, grinding, nail biting, cheek biting, chewing objects)
 - Your teeth should only touch lightly and quickly when swallowing and be apart the rest of the time (only 4-6 minutes of a 24 hour day).
 - Analogy: Pts often cross their ankles in the dental chair. If you had knee pain which was aggravated by crossing ankles you would need to break this habit. This is similar to daytime clenching/grinding. Try “tongue up and teeth apart”¹ (same as the “N rest” position⁸).
 - When yawning limit opening with your hand.
- DIET
 - Avoid hard and chewy foods to rest the jaw muscles and joints. Chew slowly and cut the food into smaller pieces.
 - Avoid biting with your front teeth which compresses the jaw joints.
 - Avoid chewing gum.
 - Reduce caffeine intake (max 1 cup coffee/day, or 2 cups tea/day).¹
- MEDICATIONS
 - NSAIDS (initially, as needed basis, not for long term usage).
 - Voltaren gel 1% diclofenac sodium (over-the-counter topical NSAID gel, about 2 peas amount to sore areas such as shoulders, neck, jaw, and/or temples 3-4 times a day as needed).
 - Ethyl chloride spray (prescription refrigerant spray to reduce head and neck muscle pain every 3-4 hours followed by jaw stretching with the Gentle Jaw).
- HOT AND COLD COMPRESS
 - If mild to moderate pain, apply moist heat for 15-20 minutes.
 - If new injuries, severe pain, or re-injuries, apply cold for 5-10 minutes.
- POSTURE
 - Improve your daytime posture (posture exercises).
 - Avoid resting your chin in your hand.
 - If you sleep on your stomach, change your sleep posture to sleeping on your back or your side. Sleeping on your stomach puts strain on your neck and jaw.
- THERAPY
 - Cognitive therapy for stress reduction, reduction of daytime clenching/bruxing.
 - Physical therapy to improve daytime/sleep posture, neck symptoms, range of motions, TMJ function)¹