

Temporo-Mandibular Joint (TMJ)

TMJ is located in front of the ears and attaches the lower jaw (mandible) to the temporal bones in your skull. The TMJ serves as a hinge for the jaw and moves together every time you use your mouth.

TMJ disorders can cause pain and dysfunction in the jaw joint and the muscles that control jaw movement. The condition appears to be more common in women than men

A diagnosis is usually made after a complaint of:

- Tenderness/stiffness in the jaw muscles
- Multiple headaches
- Dull, aching pain in the face
- Pain in the sinuses, ears, eye, teeth, neck muscles, and shoulders
- Clicking or popping or grating or locking in the jaw joints
- Inability to open or close the mouth freely

- Difficulty in yawning, chewing and swallowing
- Altered bite (how upper and lower teeth fit together).

Most people have relatively mild forms of the disorder. Their symptoms improve significantly, or disappear spontaneously, within weeks or months.

For others the conditions causes long term, persistent and debilitating pain.

In many cases TMJ disorders can be successfully treated. In acute phases it may take 2 to four weeks before you feel some improvement in your symptoms.

Avoid:

- extreme jaw movements (wide yawning and loud singing)
- clenching, gritting and grinding your teeth.
- continually biting or chewing on things such as ice, gum, pencils and fingernails.
- hard, crunchy, sticky or chewy foods.

Things that might help:

- Learn techniques to reduce stress
- Chew food evenly on both sides of the mouth
- Eating soft foods
- Painkillers, anti-inflammatories, muscle relaxants or antidepressants to help ease symptoms.
- Stabilization splint or bite guard (from your dentist)
- Practice good head and neck posture
- Heat
- Counselling
- Massage
- Acupuncture
- Ultrasound
- Exercises (see over page)

References

<http://www.patient.co.uk>: Temporomandibular-Joint-Disorders

Exercises

1. Place two fingers under your chin and open your mouth slowly. Hold for 3-6 seconds. Close mouth slowly.
2. Place thumbs under chin and two index fingers on the ridge between your mouth and the bottom of your chin. Push down lightly on your chin as you close your mouth.
3. Slowly close your mouth, keeping the tongue touching the roof of the mouth. Do this holding a pencil at teeth midline and try to keep this in the middle
4. Slowly move your jaw from side to side, increase the distance as the exercise becomes easier
5. Move the bottom jaw forward so that the bottom teeth are in front of the top teeth. Increase the distance as the exercise becomes easier
6. These exercises should not be painful. If it hurts to do them stop doing them and phone Therapy Services on **01625 661481** for advice.

Comments, compliments or complaints

We welcome any suggestions you have about the quality of our care and our services.

Contact us:

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Temporo Mandibular Joint (TMJ) Dysfunction

Patient Information

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