

## **TMJ PAIN-DYSFUNCTION ; 4 steps to manage jaw joint pain**

*Please read this information sheet. If you have any questions, particularly about the treatment or potential side-effects, please ask your doctor.*

- **Rest yourself and your jaw**
  - **Relax and practice stress reduction**
  - **Exercise** regularly
  - **Eat soft foods** and avoid hard, crusty foods like nuts or hard bread or those that need chewing a great deal
  - **Chew on your back teeth**, not the front ones
  - **Eat small bites**
  - **Sleep on your side**
- **Avoid joint or muscle damage by avoiding**
  - **contact sports**; wear a mouthguard if you must play contact sports
  - **excessive jaw use** in yawning, grinding and clenching
  - **chewing gum**
  - **habits** such as biting
    - finger nails
    - pens and pencils
    - lip
  - **long dental appointments or general anaesthesia**
  - **cradling the telephone** between head and shoulder
  - **wind instrument playing**
- **Reduce muscle pain with analgesics and** by applying
  - **cold packs** for 10 minutes every 3 hours for 72 hours after injury
  - **hot packs** for 20 minutes every 3 hours to uninjured joints/muscles
- **Re-educate the jaw opening**
  - **Open your mouth with a hinge movement**: exercise your jaw twice daily, opening 5 times in front of a mirror, ensuring the jaw opens vertically downwards without deviating sideways
  - **Exercise your jaw** 3 times daily for 5 timed minutes
    - close your mouth on the back teeth
    - put the tip of your tongue on the palate behind your front teeth
    - move the tongue back across the palate as far as it will go
    - keep the tongue in this position with the teeth closed for 10 seconds

- open your mouth slowly until the tongue starts to leave the palate
- keep that position for 10 seconds
- close your mouth
- repeat over 5 minutes

*A patient has the right under common law to give or withhold consent to medical examination of treatment. This is one of the basic principles of health care. Patients are entitled to receive sufficient information in a way they can understand about the proposed treatments, the possible alternatives and any substantial risk or risks which may be special in kind or magnitude or special to the patient, so that they can make a balanced judgement. (UK Health Dept. 19.2.99. HSC 1999/031)*

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February 2003