



Cornerstone Dental Group

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TMD Self-Care Tips

Avoid opening the mouth too wide.

- Stifle yawns to prevent opening the mouth too wide.
- Take small bites of food. Cut apples, sandwiches or other large foods into small pieces.

Apply heat and cold, and stretch.

- Freeze a Styrofoam cup of water and cut off the upper portion, exposing the ice. Apply ice to jaw muscles, stretching the mouth open and closed 20 times. Follow with warm compresses (a hot wet face cloth) and stretching for ideally 15-20 minutes.

Dental Treatment

- The day before and the day after, place warm compresses on the sides of the face at least twice daily, 10 minutes each time. More is better.
- After your appointment, apply ice to the joint area and jaw muscles in 10-minute intervals.
- Avoid long dental appointments if possible. Take frequent breaks during appointments.

Rest your jaw muscles and the jaw joint

- Avoid chewing gum, biting nails, chewing your cheek or biting pencils.
- Avoid clenching your jaw and grinding your teeth. Throughout the day, remind yourself to relax your jaw: teeth apart, muscles relaxed.
- Avoid chewy or hard foods, such as bagels, raw carrots and other raw vegetables, crusty breads and hard chips.
- Use a bruxism appliance (night guard) if prescribed by your dentist.

Manage your stress

- People often react to stress by clenching and tightening facial and neck muscles. Choose the method of stress management that best suits you and stick to it.

Sleep

- Sleep on your back or side when possible: sleeping on your stomach puts pressure on your jaw. Sleep with a pillow under your knees when on your side.
- Get an adequate amount of sleep at night.
- Massage your face and neck muscles before you go to bed.

Thank you, and if there are any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact the office.