

## Managing Your TMJ Disorder and Facial Pain



Presented by

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## Sleep Hygiene Understanding How to Improve Sleep Quality

### SLEEP HYGIENE

#### Understanding How to Improve Sleep Quality

A good night's sleep, which decreases the probability of tooth clenching or grinding (bruxism), can be achieved by following these simple guidelines:

- Go to bed at about the same time every night and get up at about the same time each day – by doing so the body clock remains synchronized with the outside environment. Everyone has a circadian rhythm, an internal 24-hour “clock” that plays a critical role in when we fall asleep and when we awaken. Sticking to a regular awake-sleep cycle will improve your sleep patterns.
- Exercise regularly – studies have shown that exercise in the late afternoon or early evening will raise your core body temperature. As the temperature starts falling by bedtime, this decrease in body heat will help initiate sleep and will encourage restful sleep.
- Keep the bedroom temperature cool and reduce ambient noise and outside light as much as possible.
- Caffeine acts as a central nervous system stimulant, temporarily warding off drowsiness and restoring alertness, but can delay sleep onset. Beverages containing caffeine, such as coffee, black tea, soft drinks, and energy drinks, all of which contain caffeine, should be avoided for at least 4 hours prior to bedtime.
- Alcohol in small amounts acts as a sedative and does allow healthy people to fall asleep quicker and sleep more deeply for a few hours. However, excessive alcohol intake reduces restorative (REM) sleep and the more you drink before bed, the more it disrupts the sequence and duration of natural sleep states. This may cause daytime drowsiness and poor concentration. Alcohol consumption can lead to fragmented sleep, often worsening snoring and sleep apnea.

- Cigarette smokers are four times as likely as nonsmokers to report feeling unrested after a night's sleep. Smokers spend less time in deep sleep and nicotine dependence may be a significant predisposing factor for bruxism. The stimulating effects of nicotine may cause nicotine withdrawal during the night, contributing to disturbances in sleep.
- Do not undertake stimulating activities just before bed — texting, playing video games, watching movies, or having an important family discussion can stimulate the mind and delay sleep onset.
- Use your bed for sleep — by using the bed as a couch (for knitting, watching TV, studying) the brain makes connections between the bed and these “awake” activities. Don't stay in the bedroom trying to force yourself to fall asleep. If you are unable to fall asleep within 20-30 minutes, get up and engage in some activity in another room. Only return to the bedroom when you are sleepy.
- Melatonin helps regulate other hormones and maintains the body's circadian rhythm. When it is dark, your body produces more melatonin and when it is light, the production of melatonin drops. Being exposed to bright lights in the evening or too little light during the day can disrupt the body's normal melatonin cycles. Several studies have measured the effects of melatonin supplements on sleep in healthy people. Research suggests that melatonin works best for those over 55 years of age who have insomnia. Melatonin supplements may help prevent jet lag. Melatonin can affect the level of sugar in the blood. If you have diabetes, you may need to monitor your blood sugar more often, and you may need to adjust the dose of your diabetes medications. Melatonin has been reported to worsen depression symptoms, so if you have depression, check with your healthcare provider before taking the supplement. The liver removes melatonin from the body. Therefore, if you have liver disease, you should consult your physician before using a melatonin supplement. It is not known if melatonin is safe for pregnant or breastfeeding women.