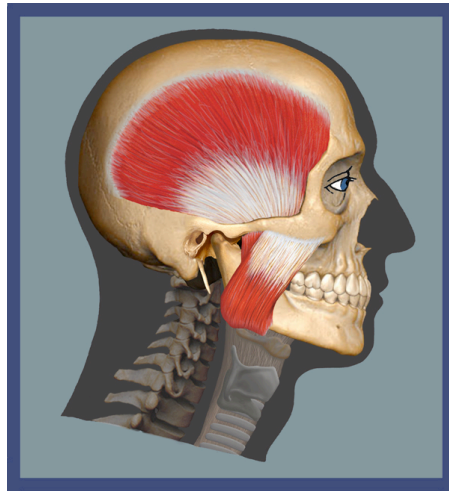


## Managing Your TMJ Disorder and Facial Pain



Presented by

*TMJ Oregon*

## Reducing Bruxism-Related Symptoms

### What Are the Signs and Symptoms of Bruxism?

- The term “bruxism” refers to both clenching and grinding of the teeth.
- Bruxism activity that occurs while you are asleep, especially tooth grinding, occurs more often if you experience restless sleep. Tooth grinding during your sleep is triggered by signals from the brain and it is not really a habit.
- Daytime bruxism is more likely to be manifest as tooth clenching or as bracing your jaw with your mouth part-way open or off to the side. This daytime activity can be reduced with conscious habit control.
- Bruxism often leads to tooth sensitivity to hot and cold and to biting pressure.
- Cracks in your teeth or flat spots (facets) are another sign of bruxism.
- Awakening with headaches or unexplained earaches accompanied by a stiff jaw strongly suggests night-time bruxism.



### What should you do if you clench or grind your teeth?

- Sleep-related bruxism can be hard to control. You can focus on preventing damage to your teeth and reduce the associated muscle discomfort by using a protective plastic guard over your teeth.
- Medications that improve your sleep patterns have been shown to reduce facial pain and headaches, but for most people this is not an ideal long-term strategy.
- Avoid using excessive caffeine or drinking caffeinated beverages within three hours of bedtime. Be aware that chocolate and many soda, energy, and sport drinks contain caffeine. Excessive alcohol intake reduces restorative (REM) sleep and the more you drink before bed, the more likely you are to grind your teeth. Smokers spend less time in deep sleep and nicotine dependence may be a significant contributing factor for bruxism.
- Create a quiet and dark sleep environment. Go to bed at about the same time every night and get up at about the same time each day. Do not short-change yourself on sleep.
- Consider attending relaxation therapy, biofeedback, or yoga classes to help reduce stress. A poll by the National Sleep Foundation found that 83% of people said that they slept better when they exercised (even late at night). However, you should avoid vigorous exercise immediately before going to bed.
- To control daytime clenching or bracing you have to first become aware of the activity. Have those around you remind you if they see your jaw set tight. When you catch yourself clenching, remember to keep your:

**Lips together and teeth apart.**