

Practical Advice Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) Pain

Your situation:

TMJ pain or dysfunction can have several causes, namely:

- Muscle tension (related to stress, posture, or bruxism),
- Bite imbalance (teeth alignment),
- Joint problems (disc displacement, osteoarthritis, inflammation, etc.).

Diet

- Choose soft foods: purees, pasta, fish, etc.
- Avoid chewing hard, sticky, or crunchy foods (candy, gum, hard bread, etc.).
- Avoid opening your mouth wide (large sandwiches, excessive yawning).

Rest and Mobilize the Jaw

- Rest the jaw as much as possible.
- Do not clench your teeth: keep them slightly apart when resting.
- Avoid sudden or prolonged jaw movements.

Apply heat or cold

- Heat (warm hot water bottle) to relax muscles if you feel tense.
- Cold (wrapped ice pack) for acute pain or inflammation.
- Duration: 10 to 15 minutes, 2 to 3 times per day.

Self-massage and gentle exercises (if recommended)

- Gently massage the muscles of the cheeks (masseters) and temples (temporal).
- Mobilization exercises may be prescribed if appropriate for your situation.
- Never force the jaw. If pain occurs, stop.

Bruxism and stress management

- Avoid clenching or grinding your teeth (especially at night).
- An occlusal splint may be recommended (if prescribed by your practitioner).
- Relaxation techniques, breathing, yoga etc. can help reduce stress.

Posture

- Stand up straight and avoid leaning your head forward for long periods (computer, phone).
- Use a monitor stand and a suitable chair if you work seated for long periods.

Avoid:

- Chewing gum.
- Biting your nails and chewing on objects.
- Resting your hand on your jaw.

Follow-up

- Keep your check-up appointments if necessary.
- If the pain worsens or persists, contact your practitioner again.

Mon-Fri 8am- 5pm at **514 252-0880**