

Occlusal Orthotic Appliance Care Instructions

- Keep appliance in its case when not in use.
- Always keep away from pets, direct sunlight, and heat.
- Clean appliance by removing it then brushing it with a tooth brush. Plain cavity toothpaste (do not use whitening, tartar control, or total care) or bar soap can be used. Rinse in cool water.
- Bitesplints should be put to place by seating it on one side then push down on the other. To remove splint, release in the back on one side with the index finger of dominant hand.

General Information

- Appliance should be worn 20 hours per day for the first week; only to be taken out to eat, then as directed by doctor. It only works when it is being worn.
- Follow up appointments are very important. Minor changes made during appliance therapy make a significant difference in the overall outcome. You are paying for the course of therapy not just the appliance.
- Bring appliance to all appointments, including cleanings, to check bite and fit.
- **LOST or BROKEN APPLIANCES-** If the appliance is lost or broken there will be a fee to repair or making a new appliance.
 - Common ways appliances are lost or broken: pets chewing or moving it, putting in your pocket without the case, placing it in a napkin when eating and then discarding it, and inserting it improperly.
- It is normal for the appliance to wear over time and may become brittle.

What to Expect During Appliance Therapy

- When the appliance is first removed you may notice that the bite does not feel the same when you close together as it did before wearing the appliance. The appliance has not moved your teeth.
- During appliance therapy, the lower jaw and the muscles that control the lower jaw begin to move to a more comfortable position; often this position is different than before wearing the appliance. This IS a reversible condition. By removing the appliance and discontinuing use, the jaws and muscles will return to their original position, and you can expect the original symptoms to return.
- We will re-evaluate your condition and make recommendations after we feel appliance therapy reached its maximum benefit. We will determine how your teeth fit together when muscles and joints are comfortable and original symptoms are diminished or no longer present. The average time is 2 to 4 months. You may feel more comfortable wearing your appliance at night even after treatment is complete.
- Appliance therapy may not resolve all of the contributing factors and other professionals may be needed to treat residual symptoms. This will be discussed with you over the course of your treatment.

HOME CARE SUGGESTIONS

- Avoid sleeping on your stomach as it will place unwanted pressure on your jaw.
- For the next few months, avoid eating hard, tough, chewy foods, or chewing gum. A soft diet is recommended along with nutritional supplements. Avoid opening your mouth wider than comfortable.
- Applying moist heat at least twice a day for 20 minutes followed with 10 minutes of ice is helpful for swollen or tender muscles of the face and neck. Follow with gentle stretching of these muscles.
- Attempt to maintain good posture. If you use a telephone a great deal, use a headset or switch sides frequently. If you are lifting or holding a small child, switch sides frequently. Try not to hold your head down too long when reading, studying, etc. Avoid supporting your face with your hands. Do not eat, read, watch TV, or use a computer while in bed or reclined in a recliner.
- When yawning, tilt your head forward and place your fist under your chin to keep from opening too wide.
- Exercising at least 3 times per week for approximately 20 minutes is helpful.
- Limit your intake of central nervous system stimulants: caffeine, refined sugar, chocolate, tobacco products, energy drinks, etc.
- An over the counter medication (OTC) can also be taken. Ibuprofen (Advil) is the most effective medication for this type of pain. If ibuprofen is not tolerated acetaminophen (Tylenol) can be taken. Medications should be taken as directed on the label.
- An important step in breaking the habit of destructive clenching and grinding is to be aware of when it occurs. Try to avoid clenching by keeping lips together and the teeth apart. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Relax your tongue on the roof of your mouth. In doing these steps, it will help relax muscles that have become tense, and it also helps normal positioning of the Temporomandibular Joints.

If you ever have any questions or concerns regarding your treatment, please do not hesitate to call our office, (701) 929-4200.