



Conservative treatment options for TMJ/TMD

1. Diet modification

Chewing strains the facial muscles. Just like a sprained ankle, you need to keep pressure off the muscles, ligaments and joints.

1. Eat soft foods such as scrambled eggs, oatmeal, tofu, soup, mashed potatoes and non-fried fish.
2. Avoid crunchy foods such as apples, carrots, and corn on the cob.
3. Meat should be ground or finely chopped; you may want to try hamburger meat instead of steak.

2. Apply heat in painful areas

Heat: Moist heat helps relax muscles and increase blood flow. Apply it to the affected areas for 10-20 minutes as needed; repeat it as needed.

3. Avoiding triggers

Certain jaw activities (triggers) can make symptoms worse.

1. Avoid hard, chewy or crunchy foods such as nuts, pretzels, popcorn, chips, gum, caramel, gummy candies, carrots, whole apples, hard breads, and ice.
2. When you feel a yawn coming on, support your chin with your fist to prevent wide, painful yawns
3. Avoid certain activities that can worsen facial pain such as nail biting, yelling, singing and certain sexual activities.

4. Physical therapy

1. Many patients with facial pain problems can benefit from physical therapy.
2. Physical therapists can help relax tight muscles and improve blood circulation by massaging and gently manipulating these muscles.
3. Jaw exercises can also help restore range of motion and strengthen facial muscles

5. Occlusal Splint & Dental Appliances

If you clench or grind your teeth at night, an occlusal splint or certain dental appliances may be appropriate. These are created by dental specialists.

6. Evaluation of sleep conditions

1. If you have increased upper airway resistance such as nasal/sinus congestion, this can trigger increased activation of the facial and neck muscles as seen in clenching and/or grinding of your teeth.
2. If you fail to find relief with conservative therapy, a sleep study can be performed in your home to help guide further management.