

## OCCLUSAL SPLINT INSTRUCTIONS



### WHAT IS IT FOR?

An occlusal splint is a removable appliance made of acrylic /resin that covers all the biting surfaces of upper or lower teeth.

It is indicated for patients who have jaw /muscle pain or headaches; temporomandibular disorders (TMD) or patients who display excessive wear of their teeth from clenching or grinding (bruxism).

It will allow the jaw to find its best position because the splint prevents the teeth from locking together, which reduces load on jaw muscles & teeth.

### ADVANTAGES

Protects natural teeth from further wear & prevent further cracking of teeth. Protects restorations, resin fillings or Buildups, Crowns, Bridges or Implant restorations.

Relieves jaw joint pain, muscle aches in jaw, jaw/muscle related headaches/neck pain.

Stabilises jaw joint

Promotes jaw relaxation in patients with stress -related pain symptoms.

### WHEN TO WEAR

If you are aware you grind at night then wear at night while you sleep to prevent this. If you are experiencing pain in the morning on awakening again this is a sign of night-time clenching so again wear at night until symptoms subside.

If you find you are clenching during the day then, daytime use is advised. If you are getting pain in jaw joints or muscles during the day then daytime use is indicated. Some patients require full time use during initial phases to get pain to subside

### WHAT TO EXPECT INITIALLY

Excess saliva for a few days, this normally subsides after a week or two of continued use.

Once put in feels tight initially for a few minutes, this is normal. It will feel snug against the teeth but not too tight or uncomfortable. It should not rub the gums.

The jaw position will be unusual at first but after a few days become used to the new position. Pain if it was a symptom should subside.

Altered speech should return to normal if using it during the day as the tongue adjusts to new position. Practice reading out loud in private before using in public for the first time.

### **WHEN TO REMOVE**

Do not wear whilst eating, it is not designed for this.

Remove while cleaning your teeth, sounds obvious but happens late at night!

Not to be worn during sporting activities, this is not a sports mouthguard.

### **CLEANING & STORAGE**

The splint needs to be kept clean, just as your own natural teeth.

Bad breath & taste will result from inadequate cleaning.

Clean with a soft brush & anti-bacterial hand soap for a minute before & after use.

Rinse & dry then place in storage box provided.

It may be disinfected for 10 minutes periodically in Milton's Solution once per week to keep microbe levels down.

### **MAINTENANCE**

Keep appointments for review or adjustments of occlusal splint.

Bring along to EVERY DENTAL APPOINTMENT so this can be checked & adjusted as required.

Do not keep wearing unless you are having the periodic 6 monthly appointments so it can be checked it is fitting/working properly.

### **WHEN TO CONTACT DENTAL CLINIC**

If pain is not reducing in jaw joints after a several days of continued use.

The bite is not comfortable.

It feels too loose & keeps falling out.

Notice any cracks or damage.

Loss or breakage from incorrect use is not covered.

## **DO NOT**

**Clench or continuously bite down on mouthguard**

**Soak in Dettol/denture cleaning agents /alcohol based mouthwash for long periods**

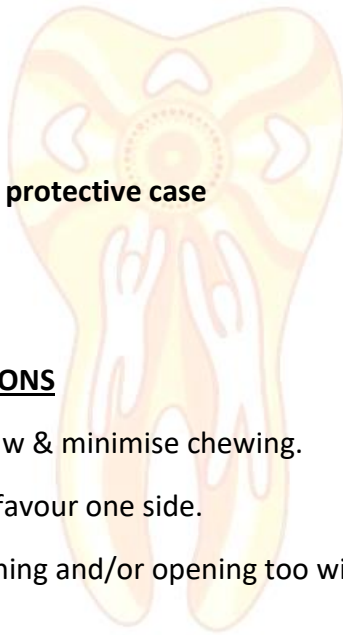
**Use toothpaste to clean**

**Place in hot water**

**Leave out in direct sunlight**

**Carry in pocket without being in protective case**

**Leave out for the dog to chew!**



## **ALTERNATIVE TREATMENT OPTIONS**

Modified diet, soft diet, to rest jaw & minimise chewing.

Try to chew on both sides & not favour one side.

Avoid extreme movements, yawning and/or opening too wide & don't talk too much!

Physiotherapy.

Exercises, massage, gentle stretching can be effective in reducing pain.

Hot and cold packs applied to tender areas can be useful in reducing pain

Relaxation & stress management can go a long way to stopping the symptoms.

Medications, painkillers including anti-inflammatories are useful in short term pain management.

Sedative or Muscle relaxant eg; Valium can also be useful short term.