

TMD SERIES

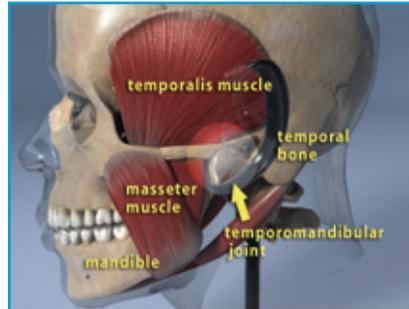
# Neuromuscular Dentistry and TMD

TMD, sometimes called TMJ, is a cycle of pain, muscle spasms, and jaw joint problems that results when the teeth, chewing muscles, and jaw joints don't work together in harmony.

The letters "TMD" stand for temporomandibular dysfunction. This refers to problems with the muscles and joints that join the mandible bone of the jaw to the temporal bone at the base of the skull.

## Symptoms of TMD

Symptoms may include headaches, worn teeth, painful muscles in the face, neck, and shoulders, clicking and popping of the jaw joint, earaches, pain behind the eyes, difficulty opening and closing the mouth, ringing in the ears, tingling hands, and other problems.



*The temporomandibular joint*



*Orthotics stabilize the bite*

## A problem bite can cause TMD

There are many causes of TMD, such as grinding and clenching of teeth, an injury, and emotional stress. But a very common cause is a bad bite.

A problem bite often exists when teeth are missing, misaligned, or worn down. These conditions can prevent the upper teeth from meshing correctly with the lower teeth. This forces the jaw to shift position and the muscles to work harder than they should to bring the teeth together. And when you are not chewing, your jaw muscles may not fully relax, even though they feel normal to you.

You bring your teeth together to swallow thousands of times a day. If your bite is out of alignment, the muscles and joints become sore, tired, and stiff. Over time, this constant muscle tension leads to muscle fatigue, spasm, and pain. The constant strain on the muscles can also pull the disc that cushions the jaw joint out of position. If this happens, the bones of the jaw joint can rub against each other and the nerves, causing pain and damaging the joint.

## Diagnosis and treatment

Fortunately, TMD is treatable. First we'll analyze your bite using advanced equipment to identify any problems.

Then we may have you wear a custom-crafted bite splint, called an orthotic, for the next several months to relax the muscles, restore balance to the jaw joint, and stabilize the bite.

Once we have stabilized your bite, we can permanently correct it. Depending on your situation, we may have you wear a durable long-term orthotic, replace missing teeth, move teeth with orthodontic treatment, or place crowns and veneers on the affected teeth.

Millions of people suffer from TMD, but with treatment, we can relieve or manage pain and restore harmony to the teeth, muscles, and jaw joint.