



Burkhardt • Pecora orthodontics

TMJ and MYOFASCIAL PAIN

HOME CARE REGIMEN FOR TMJ AND MYOFASCIAL PAIN PATIENTS

Do not chew gum! Chewing gum can make your jaw situation significantly worse, similar to running on a sprained ankle.

Avoid clenching your teeth together. Try to keep in mind during waking hours the phrase “lips together, teeth apart.”

Avoid foods that require a lot of chewing. This includes excessively hard or sticky foods.

Apply moist heat. Apply to the areas that ache using a heating pad that supplies moist heat or a dry heating pad in combination with a moist towel. Do this for periods of 20 minutes twice each day.

Beware of opening your mouth excessively wide. This tends to stretch muscles and ligaments within the jaw joint beyond their capacity to heal. It is especially helpful to support the lower jaw with your fist underneath your chin while yawning.

Limit the intake of sugar, caffeine, and nicotine. Sugar and caffeine stimulate the nervous system, resulting in increased muscle activity. In most cases, we are trying to rest muscles in order to heal painful spasms. Nicotine causes blood sugar to rise, which again increases muscle activity.

Sleep on your back. In order to sleep on your back, the natural curvature of the spine must be preserved. Place a pillow underneath your knees and either a small pillow or a rolled up towel underneath your neck for support.