

# TMJ Dysfunction

## Body Part

Temporomandibular Joint (Jaw)

## Condition:

TMJ Pain / Dysfunction

## Summary

TMJ pain is the second-most common chronic musculoskeletal condition after low back pain. TMJ pain affects up to 15% of adults, with a peak incidence between 20 and 40 years of age.

TMJ Pain is most commonly caused by:

- Bruxism (teeth grinding), often occurs at night when asleep
- Occlusal problems, such as poor bite, underbite, overbite
- Derangement / displacement of the TMJ articular disc
- Masticatory muscle dysfunction (chewing muscles)

Contributing factors may include:

- Mandible (jaw) malalignment secondary to an occlusional appliance or orthodontic treatment
- Wisdom teeth removal
- Prolonged mouth opening (eg. dental procedure)
- Poor neck posture, especially forward head positioning
- Stress
- Whiplash / trauma (eg. blow to the chin)
- Less common causes: polyarthritic conditions, tumours, anatomical abnormalities

## Symptoms:

- Pain over cheek muscles, usually worst with talking, chewing and yawning
- May have 'pop' or 'click' in TMJ when opening/closing mouth
- May have issues with jaw 'catching' or 'locking' once open
- Difficulty opening / closing mouth
- May also have headaches, ear buzzing/ringing, decreased hearing, dizziness, pain behind eyes, neck pain

## Treatment:

- 1) Education about:
  - Resting jaw position / neck posture correction
  - Ergonomic advice: desk setup, pillow/ sleeping posture
  - Eating modifications (eg. avoiding foods that require extra chewing)
- 2) Manual therapy:
  - Massage / Mobilisations / Dry Needling to neck & shoulder blade region
  - Mobilisation techniques to TMJ
- 3) Home Exercise Program to
  - Retrain / improve coordination masticatory (chewing) muscles
  - Stretch / relax tight neck muscles
- 4) Liaison with your Dentist and Oral Medicine Specialist if required (many patients commonly require a night splint to manage their symptoms)

## Prognosis:

As a general rule, TMJ opening disorders (how the jaw moves when opening or closing) are more likely to be successfully treated with jaw movement improvement techniques such as massage, Dry Needling, muscle stretch/relaxation/coordination exercises or joint capsule stretching techniques.

TMJ 'opening disorders' include:

- Masticatory (chewing) muscle disorder
- TMJ (joint) disorder: hypermobility, stiffness or arthritis
- TMJ disc displacement disorder (eg. locking, clicking)
- Cervical Spine (neck) posture issue

A dentist is usually involved in the management of TMJ closing disorders such as bruxism (teeth grinding) due to the addition of teeth occlusion. In some cases, an occlusal splint or bite plate may be recommended.

TMJ 'closing problems' include:

- A locked-open joint
- An occlusion problem, which may require a bite assessment from your dentist

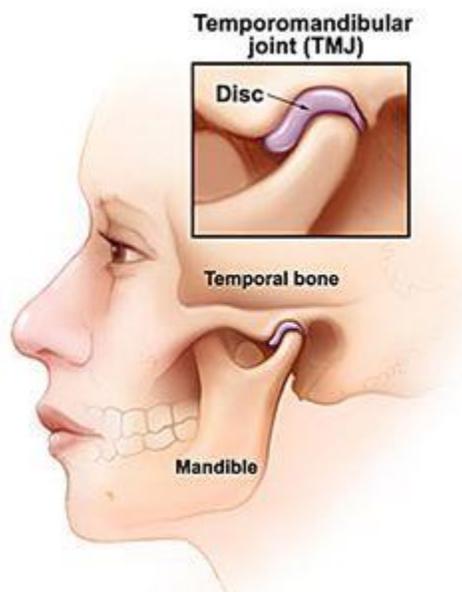
## Further information:

For further information, please contact our friendly team at Gen Health.

Picture Link:



<https://www.aestheticdentalspa.net/tmd-symptoms-treatment.html>



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<https://www.webmd.com/oral-health/guide/temporomandibular-disorders-tmd#1>



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