



2991 Treat Blvd., Ste. F • Concord, CA 94518 • (925) 689-4790

## TMD SYMPTOMATIC CARE

### 1. HABITS

- a. Do not lean or rest on your jaw during the day.
- b. Sleep on your back. Avoid sleeping on your side or stomach. These sleeping positions can place harmful pressure on your jaw during the night.
- c. Avoid biting your fingernails, chewing ice, gum, pencils, or other objects.

### 2. SOFT DIET

- a. During the initial phase of treatment, particularly if symptoms are acute, stay on a soft diet. Soups, milkshakes, eggs, pasta, hamburgers, etc. are good choices.
- b. When the symptoms start to improve, you may start to eat more substantial foods. However, you should cut all food into small bite-size pieces. Do not open your mouth any wider than the thickness of your thumb.
- c. Do not eat hard crusts of bread, tough meat, raw vegetables, chew gum, or any other food that requires prolonged chewing.

### 3. PAIN CONTROL

- a. Aspirin or Advil is the drug of choice for inflammation of any joint. Take two pills every four hours. Reduce the amount of aspirin or Advil taken as the symptoms improve.
- b. If you need a stronger drug, your doctor can prescribe a different type of pain medication.

### 4. MOIST HEAT / ICE

- a. Moist heat applied to the area around the painful joint provides better relief from pain than dry heat.
- b. Fill a wash basin with water as hot as the skin can stand and soak two large, thick towels in it. Take one out, wring it out, and apply it to the painful area. When the first towel cools, remove it and apply the second towel. Apply to area for 20 minutes (as many hot towels as needed for a total moist heat time of 20 minutes).
- c. This procedure should be carried out 3 times a day. Follow moist heat with ice cubes. Rub area for 30 seconds.
- d. Immediately follow ice with 10 more minutes of moist heat.

### 5. DISENGAGEMENT

- a. One of the most important steps in breaking the habit of clenching and grinding your teeth is to learn to keep the lips together and the teeth apart. You must make a conscious effort to separate the teeth at the same time you keep the lips closed. Repeat to yourself several times a day, "Lips together and teeth apart".
- b. This simple step will relax the very muscles that become tense and taut, besides permitting a more normal positioning of the jaw joints.
- c. Remember, the only time your teeth should normally touch is during swallowing and chewing.
- d. If you clench or grind your teeth, you will continue to injure your chewing system and delay the healing process.