

Mississauga Dental Specialists

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Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction (TMJ)

Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction Syndrome (TMJ) is a common condition affecting a wide variety of people. TMJ is characterized by severe headaches, jaw pain of varying degrees, grinding teeth, and an intermittent ringing in the ears. The vast majority of TMJ sufferers are unaware that the root cause of these problems is something that a dentist can effectively treat.

The symptoms of TMJ are debilitating and can greatly interfere with everyday life. The comfort and general wellbeing of the patient is at the heart of the dental practice, so pain relief is the first consideration of the dentist. The dentist is able to test, diagnose, and devise an immediate plan to treat the underlying causes of the TMJ disorder.

Reasons for treating TMJ

TMJ sufferers report that their symptoms generally worsen during periods of prolonged or unexpected stress, and that intense outbreaks of the condition can lead to neck pain and dizziness.

The most common cause of TMJ is the misalignment of the teeth, often called "bad bite." It is possible for the dentist to realign or adjust the teeth without the need for painful or expensive surgeries. The realignment/adjustment will stop the pounding headaches, the jaw pain, and the dizziness.

The grinding teeth symptom is particularly common and usually occurs at night. The grinding will eventually erode the structure of the teeth and lead to much more severe dental problems in the future. Untreated TMJ is one of the prime underlying factors in eroded jawbones and loose teeth. It is important for *anyone* experiencing the symptoms of TMJ to visit the dentist for an *exact diagnosis*.

What does treating TMJ involve?

TMJ could be a result of several different problems. Muscle pain resulting from bruxism is most common, but an injury resulting from a blow to the meniscus cartilage is also a possibility. Initially, the dentist will thoroughly examine the jaw area, the patient's bite, take X-rays, and review the patient's history in order to make an accurate diagnosis and recommend necessary treatment.

Once a firm diagnosis is attained, there are several ways in which relief can be provided. A specially molded bite guard can be created to stop teeth grinding during the night. A bite relationship analysis may be recommended by the dentist. The dentist can also provide advice on relaxation techniques which will lessen the effects of stress. As a last alternative, the dentist is also able to prescribe muscle relaxants.

Sometimes surgery is required for more complex TMJ problems.

If you are experiencing any symptoms of TMJ, we encourage you to contact our office today to schedule an appointment.