

# *FAMILY DENTISTRY at the LAKES*

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## **Your TMJ/Occlusal Appliance**

### **1. Your TMJ(Temporo Mandibular Joint) can often suffer from problems in one or more areas:**

- Muscles
- Bones
- Disk between Bones
- Nerves

Often, overloading the joint area can cause the muscles in a patient's head and neck to be sore, clicking and popping can occur and most often patients suffer headaches. To prevent chronic inflammation in the TMJ or long term breakdown of teeth, splint therapy is often prescribed.

### **2. DESCRIPTION**

Your appliance, often called an Occlusal Guard or TMJ Splint, is made of acrylic and fits over the teeth. This appliance has an uneven surface, which the teeth fit against when the jaw is closed. The appliance is removable.

### **3. WHAT IS THE NEED FOR A SPLINT (OR OCCLUSAL APPLIANCE)?**

In your jaw joints, you have a piece of fibrous material (disk) between the head of the lower jaw (condyle) and the fixed upper jaw. This disk may not stay between the jaws at all times when opening and closing. This may cause muscles in the head and neck to become sore to palpitation and clicking jaw noises or headaches can occur.

### **WEARING THE APPLIANCE**

Depending on your Dentist's prescription, the appliance may need to be worn 24 hours every day, or only at night.

### **4. FREQUENCY OF VISITS**

The Doctors of Family Dentistry at the Lakes will make adjustments to the splint every few weeks to once a month at the beginning to ensure comfort, fit, and biting accuracy. The first three adjustments will be done at no charge to the patient.

### **5. CARE**

We recommend that your splint is brushed twice a day when brushing your teeth. A soft bristle brush and non-abrasive tooth gel or liquid detergent will be recommended.

**6. WHAT TO EXPECT FROM YOUR NEW APPLIANCE**

A splint takes some getting used to for certain patients. It is important to report any increase in pain to your dentist immediately, but to expect that jaw pain will subside after wearing the adjusted appliance. Splints are protective for your teeth and the joints so they should be comfortable when in the mouth.

**7. FEE**

The fee of the appliance will depend upon the exact diagnosis and design (whether its function is to simply protect your teeth from heavy wearing or to resolve a disorder) as well as the severity of the TMJ Disorder.

**8. ADDITIONAL THERAPY/TREATMENT**

It is rare that splint therapy will not provide a complete solution for a disorder, but sometimes additional deep tissue or muscle manipulation is recommended to adequate recovery. If a disorder is very severe, an oral surgeon may be consulted.