

## **Home Care Instructions for the Management of Temporomandibular Disorder (TMD):**

It is recognized that the majority of TMD is best managed through non-surgical, reversible forms of therapy. Self-help techniques and your “ownership” of the problem are very important to the overall management of your case.

Some specific recommendations are:

- **Rest:** No gum chewing! Proper amounts of rest and good quality are essential to rehabilitation. Maintain good sleep habits including proper positioning of your head and neck while sleeping.
- **Avoidance:** No wide opening including yawning (support your chin when yawning); no singing; no unusual cradling of the telephone; avoid tough or chewy foods; avoid caffeine
- **Habits:** No ice chewing; no nail biting; no clenching or other pain producing activities. If you use a computer monitor, make certain that it is properly positioned (eye level or just below eye level). Use of a telephone headset can reduce strain on the jaw and neck muscles and a properly fitting chair with low back support and arm rests can reduce postural fatigue.
- **Home Based Physical Therapy:** Application of ice can reduce swelling and pain of joints and muscles. Ice should be used in a massage fashion for 15 minutes on and 15 minutes off for 1-2 hours during the first 24-29 hours of acute pain. In circumstances when your pain increased dramatically, the use of heat/cold contrast is the recommended protocol during the first 48-72 hours of intensification. We encourage use of moist heat, appliances for 10 minutes followed by ice massage for 5 minutes (3 repetitions of each). Heat, especially moist heat, is effective for increasing muscle flexibility in chronic cases or immediately preceding stretching exercises.
- **Stretching Exercises:** Utilize your palm or thumb to support under your chin, open against moderate resistance taking 2 seconds to achieve maximum opening. Use of ice massage over the affected muscles while stretching may make the procedure more comfortable. Close naturally from this position. Perform this exercise for 30 repetitions. We recommend that you perform these exercises 4 times per day.
- **Relaxation Techniques:** Stress and tension are often associated with musculoskeletal pain. TMD patients often benefit from simple relaxation techniques such as sitting in a quiet room listening to soothing music, taking warm showers or baths, and slow deep breathing.
- **Dietary Modification:** Prepare foods by broiling, steaming, juicing, baking or pressure cooking. Your diet should be high in protein and low in both carbohydrates and saturated fat. Avoid all foods that are fried, greasy or fatty. We also recommend elimination of all carbonated, caffeinated and alcoholic beverages. Hard or chewy foods should be avoided. Remember that smaller bites of softer consistency food will reduce the force required of your chewing muscles.

- **Ibuprofen:** For 24-48 hours after having dental work you can take 2-200mg IBP every 4 to 6 hours. This will help reduce any swelling that has occurred in your joint.

**Call us at 727-785-4716 if you have any questions or concerns!**