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TMJ DO'S and DON'TS

Success in treating your TMJ symptoms depends in large part upon the way you treat the involved areas. Following these instructions will greatly enhance the correction and healing of your problem.

Do not eat any foods that require prolonged chewing such as hard crusts of bread, tough meat, or raw vegetables.

Do not eat hard, "crunchy" foods like nuts or popcorn. Stick to a soft diet.

Do not chew gum - ever!

Do not bite any food with your front teeth.

Cut food in small bite-size pieces and try to avoid opening your mouth wide.

Try to limit opening of your mouth to a thumb's thickness when yawning, laughing, coughing, sneezing, or singing.

Do not bite your nails, chew on pencils, etc.

Do not bite your lower lip.

Do not protrude your lower jaw forward in any activities such as applying lipstick, smoking, or in conversation.

Do not rest your jaw on your hand.

If wearing a dental splint, do not play with it with your tongue.

Do not clench to grind your teeth. Remember to keep your lips together and your teeth slightly apart. Breathe through your nose, not your mouth.

The rest position of your tongue should be against the roof of your mouth.

Maintain good posture at all times. Keep your head in the midline over your shoulders.

If it is painful to open your mouth to brush your teeth, try using a child's toothbrush.

It is best to sleep on your back.

Try to avoid moving your jaw in such a way that it causes the joint to make a clicking, popping, or grinding sound.

Whenever you feel pain ask yourself "What am I doing? What position am I in? What am I thinking about?" Then take corrective action.

Try to avoid stressful situations whenever possible.