

# Bruxism

## night guards to protect against grinding

### Do you grind or clench your teeth?

If you often wake up with a dull headache, sore jaw or sometimes find yourself clenching your teeth, you could be suffering from a condition called bruxism.

Many people, who are grinding their teeth, do so at night while asleep. You may not realise you are grinding; however you may wake up with a headache, toothache or earache.

### Grinding and Clenching can cause damage

Your dentist may find you are grinding by discovering unusual wear spots on your teeth or damaged dental restorations. Pressure from clenching can crack and fracture teeth and restorations. Teeth can also become sensitive as the enamel is worn away.

The jaw joints on either side of your face can also be damaged. The facial muscles can become sore and the joints tender.

### Reasons for Grinding and Clenching

Grinding is a common occurrence and there are many reasons why adults and children alike grind their teeth.

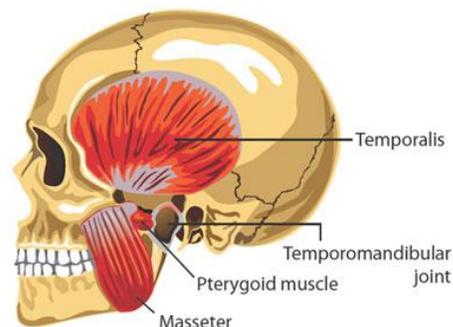
- Pain or discomfort from ailments
- Stressful situations
- Sleeping problems
- An abnormal bite
- Crooked or missing teeth

### Treating Bruxism

Early diagnosis is important to detect the condition before it causes severe damage, so regular examinations with your dentist are best.

Once diagnosed, depending on your individual condition, there are many ways to treat bruxism:

- Wear a 'night guard' or splint at night
- Apply a warm face cloth to sore facial muscles
- Restoring an abnormal bite – adjusting some teeth
- Reconstructing your bite with new restorations
- Relaxation techniques
- Counselling for stress
- Referral to specialist or physiotherapist



### Custom made Night Guards (Occlusal Splint)

For many people, a custom made splint or 'night guard' can be one way of treating bruxism.

The splint looks similar to a mouthguard and is worn at night while asleep. It is made from a soft material to exactly fit over your top teeth and to fit your bite.

The splint works by preventing contact between teeth on the upper and lower jaws. It also relieves some of the pressure due to clenching and grinding.

The process of making a splint involves taking moulds of your upper and lower teeth. Our technician will design and make your splint from these moulds.

The dentist will check your splint at your examinations to assess its condition. You should check your splint regularly for splits or tears and notify your dentist.

