



Conservative Management of Temporomandibular Joint Syndrome (TMJ)

Acute relief of pain:

1. Avoid straining the joint and local muscles
 - a. Soft diet for 2 weeks: Avoid hard foods that demand forceful chewing (pretzels, steaks, apples).
 - b. Stop all other stresses on the joint like nail biting and gum chewing.
2. Decrease the inflammation in the joint.
 - a. Use anti-inflammatory drugs (Motrin, Advil, Alleve...; not plain Tylenol). Check with your doctor if there are any contraindications for you taking these medications.
3. Apply warm compresses over the joint for 10 minutes at least 3 times a day. You may try an ice pack if you are having acute pain.
4. Try to have a mouth guard fitted to stop nighttime tooth grinding. You can try to fit one on your own with the smallest and most inexpensive moldable ones from a sports store. Don't use one of the large, fancy ones; they are too big for this and may make the symptoms worse.

Do all of the above intensely for the first week, then taper off and try to return to a regular diet and no medication slowly, over a week or two.

Additional Recommendations:

1. Consider seeing your dentist sooner this year. Cavities and other problems can alter the way your teeth come together and this can put undue stress on your TMJ.
2. If the "home made" mouth guard doesn't work, you may need to see your dentist to have a customized one made for you.