

Treatment Modalities

After diagnosing the problem, a variety of treatments may be recommended, initial phases of treatment are aimed to eliminate the TMJ pain - the symptoms resulting from the actual problem. In the second stage, the actual treatment to correct the problem is implemented. Various TMJ treatments are explained briefly below.

Occlusal Equilibration

In occlusal equilibration, the tops of the teeth are reshaped. This is done to alleviate pressure on individual teeth. The reshaping procedure has been found to be the solution for many conditions which cause discomfort in the head, neck and shoulders and breakdown of the dental structures.

Occlusal equilibration can be likened to a pebble in your shoe. When there is an irritant present (the pebble), your foot automatically adapts to the pebble - e.g. you may walk with a limp. With malocclusion, an existing interference (as with a tooth too high for comfort), the jaw also adapts to the particular uncomfortable tooth fit. During equilibration the irritant (too high of a tooth) is reshaped for a better fit.

Occlusal Restoration

Occlusal resotation involves the replacement or reconstruction of teeth in addition to the reshaping procedures (which eliminate the high spots on the teeth), thus allowing the face and jaw muscles to relax.

Splint / Jaw Repositioner Appliances

Splint/jaw repositioning appliances are not only used in diagnosis, but they are also used as treatment to temporarily eliminate the bite disharmony and reulsting pain. Then, during the second stage of treatment, orthodontics, crowns or equilibration may be recommended to build the bite to a permanent, healthy relationship.

Muscle Stimulation / Ultrasound

Muscle stimulation and ultrasound therapy may be prescribed to alleviate the pain before and during the actual treatment procedure.

Infrared Laser

Multiple light emitting phototherapy / low energy laser diodes is applied directly to treat joints and deep muscle in the temporomandibular joint area. With absorption of therapeutic light waves, unique therapeutic effects in tissue occur via photobiochemical reactions.

Early Treatment is Important

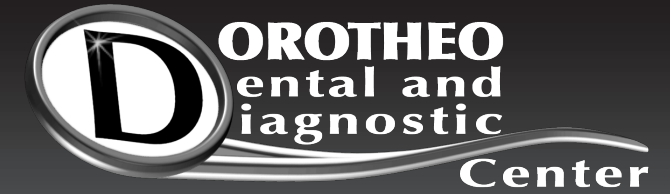
The importance of early treatment cannot be overstated. TMJ problems can advance in stages and grow progressively worse. Thus, a minor problem now could become a major source of pain in the future. Additionally, chances of successful treatment increase substantially the earlier treatment is accomplished.



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- TMJ-Orthopedics
- Oral Surgery
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- Cosmetic Dentistry
- Dental Sleep Medicine (Snoring and Sleep Apnea Management)
- Orthodontic Diagnostics Aides and X-Ray Services

**Dizziness... Earaches... Face, Head,
Neck, Shoulder and Back Pain...**

**Understanding
the Cause and
the Cure of**

T M J Pain



TMJ Disorder

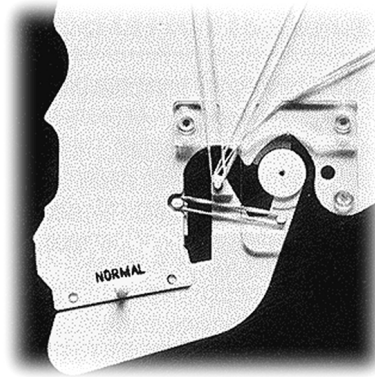
Many people suffer from headache, dizziness, earaches, face, neck, shoulder and back pain, without knowing the cause of their pain. Previously, many patients seeking medical cures for these types of problems were told it was "all in their mind." They would go from "specialist" to "specialist" seeking a cure. Then after years of unsuccessful treatment, they learned to live with the pain, usually with the aid of over the counter drugs, mainly aspirin.

Today, however, it is now known that a condition termed TMJ (temporomandibular joint) disorder accounts for a large number of these previously uncured and painful ailments. The above types of pains are symptoms of the disorder-not the problem itself. Correcting the problem rather than the symptom is at the heart of TMJ treatment.

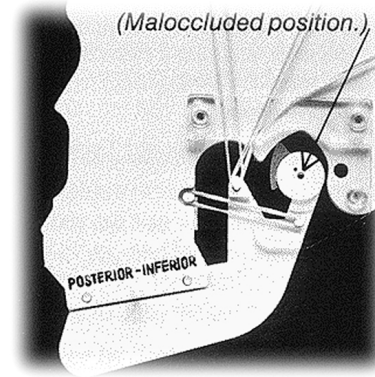
Today, with new knowledge and technology, dentists are able to diagnose and treat TMJ problems which previously have been overlooked. Additionally, the medical profession is becoming more aware of dentistry's involvement and physicians are referring patients to dentists knowledgeable in TMJ treatment.

"Bad Bite" (Malocclusion) & the Temporomandibular Joint

Your jaw joint, which holds your lower jaw in place, is suspended beneath your skull by an intricate system of muscles and tendons. The jaw joints, also known as the temporomandibular joints (TMJ), are some of the most complex in the body. The jaw joint, surrounding muscles, and the fit of your teeth are closely inter-related, each affecting the other as you make everyday jaw movements such as speaking and chewing. The way your teeth fit together is called **occlusion**. When your teeth are not in proper relation to each other and to your jaw joints, the jaw automatically shifts to a new position in an attempt to compensate



Ideal occlusion is when the teeth fit together in a comfortable relationship and there is no need for the jaw to reposition itself in order to avoid pain and muscle discomfort.



With malocclusion, in order to achieve closure and avoid pain, the jaw shifts to accommodate the teeth causing stress in and around the jaw joint and muscles.

for the misalignment of your teeth – a condition known as malocclusion (teeth do not fit together properly).

When malocclusion exists, even what looks like a good bite could be at the expense of putting pressure on other jaw joint areas as the jaw shifts to accommodate the teeth. Symptoms of misaligned teeth may be clenching, grinding, premature tooth wear, stress on the muscles and tendons, some of which may occur during sleep. Results of these symptoms are headaches and muscular aches and pains in the face, neck, shoulders and back, dizziness earaches, ringing in the ears and many other problems. In addition to these common conditions which often (but not always) relate to malocclusion and cause pain in and around the temporomandibular joint, there are other conditions which can affect the function and comfort of this joint and the total body health. These conditions include disease, nutritional deficiencies (e.g. gout, tumors, trauma and infections).

Diagnosing the Problem

Before prescribing the proper treatment for your particular problem, a variety of diagnostic procedures may be necessary. A radiograph (x-ray) may be taken of your jaw joint. This provides a clear picture of the various structures within the jaw joint. The visual radiograph is also used as a means for detecting disease in the jaw joint.

Jaw repositioners may be adjusted. These appliances are worn for a given period of time. The appliance is refined and adjusted until it eliminates the bite disharmony and pain. In this way, the bite need not be permanently altered until the problem is accurately diagnosed via the splint and other procedures. Permanent treatment would then be prescribed to duplicate the effects of the appliance, e.g. equilibration or occlusal adjustment, orthodontics or restorative procedures such as crowns.

Signs and Symptoms

SELF EVALUATION TEST:

Check yourself if you are suffering from anyone of these symptoms:

- dizziness
- headaches
- migraines
- facial pain
- ringing in the ears
- muscle pain
- insomnia
- depression
- throat problems
- eye problems
- forgetfulness
- pain down the arms radiating to the fingers
- limited jaw opening / pain upon jaw movement
- grinding / clenching of the teeth
- chronic neck, shoulder and backache (upper and lower)
- hypersensitivity (non carious teeth) - could be felt even without caries due to trauma like premature contacts, grinding or clenching, faulty tooth brushing and even moving of teeth in orthodontic treatment.