

SPLINT THERAPY

What is a splint?

- An acrylic appliance which covers either the upper or lower teeth

How does it work?

- A splint eliminates the contact between upper and lower teeth, so clenching forces are reduced.
- It serves to reduce joint symptoms, improve and stabilize muscle and jaw function, and increase chewing strength

Instructions for Wear

- When your appliance is placed, you will be given personal and specific instruction regarding when and how often your splint should be worn.
- ***Please remember to bring your splint with you to every appointment.***

What to Expect

- Slightly sore teeth for a few days as the splint “settles” into position on the teeth.
- Slight speech change (usually temporary and minor).
- An urge to clench on the splint or “play” with it while it is in your mouth. This activity is counter productive since we need jaw relaxation.
- Symptoms will change gradually, and may follow an up and down pattern.
- As your jaw muscles are reprogrammed, you may then notice that your teeth no longer fit perfectly against the splint. Periodic adjustments will keep the splint in harmony with your jaw joint and will thus provide the greatest possible comfort and most rapid healing.
- If you already have permanent damage in your jaw joints or if you habitually clench or grind your teeth, some or all symptoms may remain. In cases where damage is reversible, the signs and symptoms disappear.
- Most people experience considerable healing within months but it may take up to one year or more in some cases.

Occlusal splints are **NOT** intended as a long term or final solution nor should they be worn indefinitely (unless to address nighttime tooth grinding/clenching (sleep bruxism)). Once the problems are stabilized, further treatment suggestions, if any, will be discussed.

