

Your Occlusal Appliance

Information and Instructions for Use

Your appliance was provided for one of the following reasons:

- To protect your teeth or crowns from conscious/subconscious clenching or grinding. These habits can cause your teeth or crowns to have excessive wear, sensitivity, fractures, movement or mobility, or pain. This places the teeth at risk of fracture, splitting, or it can accelerate gum disease or cause damage to the nerves of the teeth.
- To assess how your facial pain or headaches are related to the fit of your teeth and what you do with your teeth.
- To assess how your muscle or jaw pain is related to the fit of your teeth and what you do with your teeth.
- To assess how your joint or TMJ pain is related to the fit of your teeth and what you do with your teeth.
- To assess what jaw position is healthiest and most balanced for you, where is it most repeatable, and to assess the stress on your teeth in all various jaw movements.
- To find out where your teeth should fit when your jaw joints and muscles are most comfortable and relaxed.
- To further assess if physical therapy or other testing or referrals would be appropriate.
- To discover more of what you do with your teeth before any complex dental work is done that reconstructs your bite.
- To assess how you will adapt to planned changes in your bite that are made with removable and reversible appliance.

Your appliance is designed to:

- To give solid balanced support to your bite. This helps stabilize the jaw joints and reduces muscle fatigue.
- Provide equal and simultaneous pressure when solidly biting on your back teeth. This provides the best stress distribution for your back teeth.
- Provide smooth contacts on your front teeth when you move away from your back teeth. This provides a smooth, non-stressful guidance on your front teeth and reduces lateral stresses on your back teeth.
- Provide a healthy non-restrictive range of motion for your jaw muscles, which improves comfort and reduces muscle fatigue and spasms.

How to use your appliance:

- We ask that you wear your appliance as much as possible.
- Initially you will need to wear the appliance full time 24/7 for approximately 3 months. Appliance therapy usually averages 3-6 months, with the goal to get your oral structure to a more stable environment. Once you are stable we can revisit your next step.
- Only wear it if it is quite comfortable. Call if pain or symptoms become worse.
- It is suggested to wear it during the day or driving times, yard work or during various breaks throughout the day.
- Take it in and out from one side, as showed to you. This minimizes the internal wear on the appliance, and it will last longer and stay on tighter with the least adjustments needed.

What to expect from your appliance:

- Most people adapt very quickly, as our appliance is smooth and highly refined to your particular bite.

- When you first remove the appliance, and close your teeth together, your bite may feel different from before wearing the appliance. The appliance does not move your teeth. The muscles and jaw joints quickly adapt and allow your bite to return to its original position.
- It may feel strange at first. There may be a slight initial increase in saliva flow, which generally would appear on the first or second day of use.
- Wearing the appliance typically does not increase clenching or grinding. It may increase your awareness of prior clenching and grinding habits.
- Appliance therapy may not resolve all of the symptoms you are experiencing at this time. Help from other professionals may be needed.
- When we determine appliance therapy has reached its maximum benefit, we will re-evaluate and make recommendations for the next step.
- After treatment is completed, you may feel more comfortable wearing your appliance when you sleep or during stressful times.
- If you choose to discontinue wearing your appliance during treatment, your jaw and the muscles will return to their original position; however, you can expect the original symptoms to return.

How to care for your appliance:

- Hold the appliance between the thumb and finger on one hand, by one end only. Holding it at both ends (and accidentally squeezing too hard) can lead to fracture from stresses totally unrelated to your bite.
- Brush well the inner and outer surface of the appliance with a toothbrush and toothpaste, mouthwash or antibacterial soap. Be sure to rinse the appliance completely to remove any toothpaste film or particles of paste. This small film, if not thoroughly rinsed off, can affect the fit and tightness. Then let air dry.
- It is always smart to place the appliance in its plastic case if not wearing it. The case provides lots of protection from accidents, children or pets.
- Keep the appliance far away from pets, especially dogs. Dogs find it an irresistible chewy treat!
- Over the years, the acrylic will naturally darken.
- Many patients have had their appliance for 10-15 years with minor changes needed. The appliance can serve you very well with just minimal home care.
- If the appliance does fracture, save the sections and call us. It may be repairable.

What to report at your next visit:

- Any irritating areas against your gums.
- Any obvious changes in how your teeth fit when biting into the appliance. You do not have to search for these differences. Let them find you if they stand out.
- Any changes in your awareness of clenching or grinding activities.
- Any changes in your comfort related to muscle tension, pain, headaches, jaw joint pain or jaw noises.
- What you are thinking and feeling about wearing the appliance and what you are learning about your teeth, how they fit, and what you are doing with your teeth.

Please call us if you have any questions.

Communication is very important to the success of your treatment 404-851-9711