

DENTAL CLINIC SUGGESTIONS FOR TMJ PAIN

Grinding of the teeth is usually stress related. In students, it's especially pronounced during mid-terms and finals week.



► TIPS TO **REDUCE INFLAMMATION AND INDUCE HEALING** INCLUDE:

- Avoid any clenching, grinding, or jaw tension – learn to keep face and jaw relaxed with teeth apart.
- Relax facial muscles and joints.
- Massage the jaw and temple muscles. This stimulates circulation, relaxes muscles, and decreases soreness.
- Try a soft food diet – avoid crunchy and chewy foods like hard nuts, chips, carrots and bread.
- Avoid chewing gum.

► TIPS FOR **PAIN RELIEF**:

- For quick relief from muscle pain apply heat for 5 seconds then ice for 5 seconds and repeat 4-5 times.
- For mild to moderate pain apply moist heat compress for 20 minutes to increase circulation and muscle relaxation. This can promote healing.
- For severe pain apply cold compress for 5-10 minutes.
- Over the counter pain relievers such as Ibuprofen (Advil or Motrin) may be taken if necessary to help reduce inflammation.

► TIPS TO **PROTECT THE JOINTS AND MUSCLES**:

- Try to avoid opening too wide. This protects the joints and prevents them from locking open.
- Sleeping position: try to sleep on your back with a neck curve support.
- An over the counter mouthguard may provide temporary pain relief until you can consult your dentist for a professionally made nightguard. A nightguard is a hard acrylic splint that covers the teeth of one arch. It helps to minimize grinding while protecting the teeth and jaw joints from the enormous pressures that can be exerted from clinching/ grinding.