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Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) Pain

What is the TMJ?

The temporomandibular joint or TMJ connects the upper and lower jawbones. This joint allows the jaw to open wide and move back and forth when you chew, talk, or yawn.

What Causes TMJ Pain?

There are many causes of TMJ pain. Repeated chewing (example, gum), clenching or grinding of your teeth, and arthritis are some of the causes. Some TMJ pain has no obvious cause.

What Can I do to Treat the Pain?

- Avoid chewing gum, taffy, and other chewy foods
- Try to use both sides of your mouth when chewing
- Don't bite your cheeks or fingernails
- Lower your amount of stress and worry
- Ice packs or warm cloth over joint
- Ask your doctor about over-the-counter pain medication such as Tylenol or Ibuprofen.
- Exercises for TMJ shown on following pages 5 x a day.
- Consult your doctor or dentist if you are clenching or grinding your teeth to be fitted for a bite splint/block to wear at night.

If your pain does not resolve with the above treatments, your doctor may recommend a steroid injection or botox injection to the TMJ. Rare cases require surgery.