

LifeLong Family Dentistry

TMJ (Jaw Joint) Pain Instructions

Pain in the Temporomandibular Joint (TMJ) or jaw joint is very common. The temporomandibular joint is where the lower jaw articulates with the base of your skull. Pain in this area is most often from an injury. These injuries arise from overuse, accidents, sports injury, and everyday activities like sleeping in an odd position. No matter what the source of injury, they all lead to inflammation in the joint and this inflammation is the source of the pain you feel. To reduce the inflammation and therefore alleviate the discomfort we recommend the following measures:

1. Rest your TMJ:

- a. Reduce talking to a minimum and speak quietly when required.
- b. Eat a softer diet by avoiding hard or chewy foods. No Gum Chewing is allowed.

2. Reduce inflammation:

- a. Take Ibuprophen 600 mg. every 8 hours. This needs to be taken consistently for at least 3, but no more than 5 days.
- b. Alternate heat and ice over affected area, by applying in 20 minute intervals with 20 minutes of rest between applications. So, apply in the following sequence; 20 minutes of ice, then nothing for 20 minutes, then 20 minutes of heat, then again nothing for 20 minutes. This should be done for the first 2-3 days. If either of the temperatures cause increased pain, do not continue with that treatment.

Typically the discomfort from an acute TMJ episode will resolve in 2 to 3 weeks. Some TMJ issues will require more involved treatments. It is essential for Dr. Long to monitor the progress of your healing, so periodic visits will be scheduled. If any questions or complications arise please contact our office.