

YOUR OCCLUSAL APPLIANCE INFORMATION AND INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

Your appliance was provided for several of the following reasons:

- To protect your teeth or crowns from conscious/unconscious 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 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.
- 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, jaw or tooth 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 the 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.

Your appliance is designed to:

- Provide solid balanced support for your bite. This helps to provide jaw joint stability and muscle comfort and relaxation.
- Provide equal and simultaneous pressure when solidly biting on your back teeth. This provides the best stress distribution for your back teeth, with minimal joint and muscle fatigue.
- 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:

- You decide how much to wear it. The most common use is nightly while sleeping. The more you wear it, the faster we will discover together all of the various nuances that we are looking for.
- Only wear it if it is quite comfortable. Call if pain or symptoms are made worse.
- Some people will wear it during the day or during drive times or yard work or during various breaks throughout the day.
- A few people wear it almost all day and night, except for chewing.
- Take it in and out from one side as shown. 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 very thin, smooth, and highly refined to your particular bite.
- It may feel strange at first. There may be a slight initial increase in saliva flow, which is usually just the first day or two.
- The thickness (even though it is as thin as we dare make it) will affect speech, which is the most common reason that most people do not wear it much during the day.
- If you seem to have a hard time adapting to it, try wearing it for shorter periods of time to help adaptation.
- Some people notice that they clench more initially with the appliance, as it brings previously unconscious activity to the conscious mind.
- You do not need to test all the various bite positions at home that we repeatedly look for while you are in the office. Just wear the appliance, try to forget about it, and see what feelings obviously surface.
- Your jaw can often be somewhat sore after appointments, where we are checking numerous different jaw motions and ranges of motion. Wearing the appliance more rather than less immediately after the appointment can more quickly lead to comfort, as well as you may need some special jaw exercises, which we can demonstrate if needed.

How to care for your appliance:

- Hold the appliance between thumb and fingers of 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.
- Rinse and let it air dry after wearing it overnight.
- Brush well the inner and outer surface of the appliance with a toothbrush. Be sure to rinse the appliance completely if you use toothpaste. Toothpaste, if not thoroughly rinsed off, can affect the fit and tightness.
- 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 well 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 7-10 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 really is rather easily repairable most of the time.

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, tooth sensitivity, 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.
- Keep your sense of humor. Over the past twenty years, we have heard all the stories about appliances being taken by a bird while it was on the picnic table, flushed down the toilet by the kids, run over by a car (spouse), broken while testing how strong it was, and eaten and stolen by all sorts of various species.

Our purpose and mission is to help you and to serve you. Please call if there are any questions or concerns.

Thank you