

Do You Suffer From Jaw Pain?

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TMJ (temporomandibular joint) disease/dysfunction is a painful condition affecting the area where the jaw connects to the skull. Millions of people suffer from TMJ disease/dysfunction, but the majority are women in their childbearing years.

Symptoms include:

- Facial pain, jaw pain, neck, shoulder, back pain and headaches
- Pain in facial joints with opening and closing the mouth (yawning, chewing, etc.)
- Popping or clicking sounds with jaw movements
- Inability to open the mouth or limitations in how far you are able to open the mouth
- Swelling in the face
- Deviation of the jaw to one side
- Locking of the jaw in an opened or closed position
- Difficulty swallowing
- Ear ache or ringing in the ear

Suggestions to help minimize symptoms of TMJ dysfunction:

- Avoid foods that require prolonged chewing (hard bread, tough meat, caramels)
- Do not eat hard, crunchy foods (nuts, popcorn)
- Do not chew gum
- Do not bite foods with front teeth
- Cut food into small pieces and try to avoid opening your mouth wide
- Try to limit opening of mouth to one thumb width when yawning, laughing, or sneezing
- Do not bite nails, chew on pencils, etc.
- Do not bite lower lip
- Do not rest your chin in your hand
- Do not clench or grind teeth
- Keep lips together, your tongue against the roof of your mouth and teeth slightly apart at rest.
- Breath through your nose
- Maintain good posture, with head in mid line over shoulder
- Avoid sleeping on your stomach
- Avoid jaw movements that cause clicking or popping

If you have symptoms of TMJ problems and have not been diagnosed, seek attention from your physician or dentist to discuss treatment options.