



## **Mandibular Splint Therapy**

### **Patient Instructions**

1. You are being fit today with an orthopedic appliance. As discussed previously, the intent of using this device is to decrease pain or dysfunction by relieving pressure off of the jaw joint and helping to relax the associated muscles. In order to properly evaluate the effectiveness of this treatment, it is imperative that you comply in every respect with the instructions given to you. If you find you are only able to wear the day splint on a part-time basis, or only when convenient, it is very likely that therapy will not provide you with the desired results.
2. You must wear the splint all times unless otherwise instructed. Usually during the initial adjustment period you can remove the splint for a few minutes at a time to give yourself a break. Put the appliance back in your mouth as soon as possible. It is critical that you learn to EAT with the splint in place. It is difficult at first, but PERSEVERE.
3. Because this is a foreign object in your mouth, there will be an initial adjustment period in which you will become less and less aware of its presence. The best way for you to get through this adjustment period is to avoid focusing your attention on the appliance. Your speech will be affected initially while wearing the appliance, especially in pronouncing "s" and "t" sounds. You may also experience an increase in saliva in your mouth. Please rest assured that these are usually only temporary side effects.
4. You will find when you take the appliance out of your mouth to brush your teeth and allow your teeth to lightly touch, your "bite" relationship may feel different than it did in the past. Don't be alarmed by this. It is the result of your jaw posturing itself slightly differently. Your jaw muscles have "forgotten" where all the teeth interferences are. If you leave the appliance out for a short time your muscles will be "re-programmed" to remember where the teeth interferences are and you will feel like your former bite is returning.

9. The appliance may be considered both a treatment and a diagnostic tool. We will be asking you at each visit about how your symptoms have changed. Everyone responds to therapy in different ways. Therefore, it would be very helpful if you would monitor the frequency and severity of your symptoms (headaches, muscle or joint pain, etc. ) The more information you are able to give us the more we will be able to help.
  
10. As discussed during your comprehensive exam, if you respond favorably to the use of this appliance, follow-up treatment such as equilibration, crowns and/or orthodontic treatment may be indicated. In most cases, we will attempt to wean you from the use of the day splint. If you are successful at weaning, you will likely still need to use a nightguard long term, but no other treatment such as crowns or braces would be needed. The only time that crowns, braces, or other irreversible therapy is required is when splint therapy has been very unsuccessful, and you are unable to wean from use of the splint without your symptoms returning. It is not always possible to tell you at this time which type of follow-up treatment will be needed, if any.
  
11. Duration depends primarily on the severity of your problem and how well you heal. The average time that our patients wear an appliance is six months. Additional charges may be incurred, if splint therapy extends past six months.
  
12. Additional instructions:
  - Do not Chew gum
  - Avoid chewy foods such as licorice, beef jerky, etc.
  - Consult our office before having dental procedures such as teeth cleaning, fillings, etc. Dental procedures can cause major TMD symptoms flare-ups.
  - Please do see your dentist for any dental emergencies.
  
13. Please keep these instructions accessible for the entire time that you are in treatment. There may be times when it will be necessary for you to review them.
  
14. If possible, avoid drinking soda during your treatment. If you drink soda or fruit juices, immediately rinse your mouth and splint to avoid damage to the enamel due to the acidic properties of these beverages.
  
15. In conclusion, what you do for yourself may be more important than what we do for you. During therapy it is very important that you try to have a good diet, exercise and get a good night's sleep. Our therapies are limited by your ability to health and your overall health. If stress levels are very high, you have pain in other areas of your body, or you need help with your diet and exercise, please talk to us. We may be able to help, or we will refer you to a specialist in that area.

Please call our office as soon as possible if you have any comfort issues, need further instruction, an adjustment to your appliance or have concerns about treatment.

**Our office hours are : Monday -Thursday 8am-5pm.**

**In addition, if you call our office outside of office hours, until 5PM your call will be forwarded to a staff member who can answer your questions or forward your call to our doctors.**

**After 5PM you can call the doctor's cell phones directly:  
Dr. Briesemsiter's cell 757-287-0757**