



Oasis Patient Resource

BRUXISM (TEETH GRINDING)

What is bruxism?

- A condition in which you grind, gnash or clench your teeth.
- You may unconsciously clench your teeth together during the day, or clench or grind them at night (sleep bruxism).
- Sleep bruxism is considered a sleep-related movement disorder. People with sleep bruxism are more likely to have other sleep disorders, such as snoring and pauses in breathing (sleep apnea).
- In some people, bruxism can be frequent and severe enough to lead to jaw disorders, headaches, damaged teeth and other problems.
- It's important to know the signs and symptoms of bruxism and to seek regular dental care.



Symptoms of bruxism

- Teeth grinding or clenching, which may be loud enough to awaken your sleep partner
- Teeth that are flattened, fractured, chipped or loose
- Worn tooth enamel, exposing deeper layers of your tooth
- Increased tooth sensitivity
- Jaw or face pain or soreness
- Tired or tight jaw muscles



Symptoms of bruxism

- Pain that feels like an earache, though it's actually not a problem with your ear
- Dull headache originating in the temples
- Damage from chewing on the inside of your cheek
- Indentations on your tongue

When should you seek advice?

- Your teeth are worn, damaged or sensitive
- You have pain in your jaw, face or ear
- Others complain that you make a grinding noise while you sleep
- You have a locked jaw that won't open or close completely

If you notice that your child is grinding his or her teeth, or has other signs or symptoms of bruxism, be sure to mention it at your child's next dental appointment.



What are the causes of bruxism?

The causes are not fully understood.

Possible causes:

- Emotions, such as anxiety, stress, anger, frustration or tension
- Aggressive, competitive or hyperactive personality type
- Abnormal alignment of upper and lower teeth (malocclusion)
- Other sleep problems, such as sleep apnea
- Response to pain from an earache or teething (in children)
- Stomach acid reflux into the esophagus
- An uncommon side effect of some psychiatric medications, such as phenothiazines or certain antidepressants
- A coping strategy or focusing habit
- Complication resulting from a disorder, such as Huntington's disease or Parkinson's disease



Bruxism risk factors

- **Stress.** Increased anxiety or stress can lead to teeth grinding. So can anger and frustration.
- **Age.** Bruxism is common in young children, but it usually goes away by the teen years.
- **Personality type.** Having a personality type that is aggressive, competitive or hyperactive can increase your risk of bruxism.
- **Stimulating substances.** Smoking tobacco, drinking caffeinated beverages or alcohol, or taking illegal drugs, such as methamphetamine or Ecstasy may increase the risk of bruxism.



Bruxism: Complications

- Damaged teeth, restorations, crowns or jaw
- Tension-type headaches
- Facial pain
- Disorders that occur in the temporomandibular joints (TMJs), located just in front of your ears, which may sound like clicking when you open and close your mouth



Tests and Diagnosis

- The dentist will look for changes in teeth and mouth over several visits to see if the process is progressive and to determine whether it needs treatment.
- The dentists will try to determine its cause by asking questions about general dental health, medications, daily routines and sleep habits.
- The dentist may check for:
 - Tenderness in jaw muscles
 - Obvious dental abnormalities, such as broken or missing teeth or poor tooth alignment
 - Damage to teeth, the underlying bone and the inside of your cheeks, usually with the help of X-rays



Treatments and drugs

Dental Approaches

Splints and mouth guards

- Designed to keep teeth separated to avoid the damage caused by clenching and grinding.
- These can be constructed of hard acrylic or soft materials and fit over your upper or lower teeth.

Dental correction

- When tooth wear has led to sensitivity or the inability to chew properly, the dentist may need to reshape the chewing surfaces of your teeth or use crowns.
- In certain cases, the dentist may recommend braces or oral surgery.



Treatments and drugs

Therapies

Stress management

- The problem could be prevented with professional counseling or strategies that promote relaxation, such as exercise or meditation.

Behavior therapy

- Practicing proper mouth and jaw position.
- The dentist can show the best mouth and jaw position.

Biofeedback

- Biofeedback is a form of complementary medicine that uses monitoring procedures and equipment to teach you to control muscle activity in your jaw.



Treatments and drugs

Medication

Muscle relaxants

- Taking a muscle relaxant before bedtime, for a short period of time.

OnabotulinumtoxinA (Botox) injections

- May help some people with severe bruxism who don't respond to other treatments.



Lifestyle and home remedies

- Reduce stress
- Avoid stimulating substances in the evening
- Practice good sleep habits
- Talk to your sleep partner
- Schedule regular dental exams



Questions, Suggestions, Feedback?

Email us at oasisdiscussions@cda-adc.ca

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Thank you

