



NEWSLETTER

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Temporomandibular Joint Disorder (TMJ)

TMJ refers to the temporomandibular joints on either side of the jaw. Often, TMD (temporomandibular disorders), can lead to serious headaches or acute neck, ear, jaw joint and cheek pain. Depending on the causes of TMJ and the symptoms you are exhibiting, an experienced Physical Therapist along with your Dentist can provide the treatment you need to reduce your discomfort.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF TMJ?

The symptoms associated with TMJ disorders will vary from person to person, depending on the unique causes of their discomfort. TMJ symptoms can include the following:

- * Ear Pain
- * Temple/Cheek Pain
- * Locking of the Jaw
- * Frequent Head/Neck Aches
- * Sore Jaw Muscles
- * Jaw popping/clicking
- * Opening the Mouth Fully

The pain may be sharp and searing, occurring each time you swallow, yawn, talk, or chew, or it may be dull and constant. It hurts over the joint, immediately in front of the ear, but pain can also radiate elsewhere. It often causes spasms in the adjacent muscles that are attached to the bones of the skull, face, and jaws. Then, pain can be felt at the side of the head (the temple), the cheek, the lower jaw, and the teeth.

WHAT ARE THE CAUSES OF TMJ?

There are many causes including: Cartilage wear and tear - The cartilage disks that pad the TMJ become worn or displaced, causing painful grinding of the jawbone. A popping and cracking noises that occurs when the jaw is opened or closed may also indicate the possibility of a problem, and may negatively affect movement of the jaw, and cause a strain of the musculature of the jaw, face, and neck.

Clenching and grinding – Habitual clenching and grinding of the teeth places extreme pressure and strain on the joints and is one of the most common causes of TMJ disorders. The added stress on the jaw joint can cause wear and tear of the cartilage disks, and may even cause the jaw joint to become dislocated.

Misaligned bite – If the bite of the upper and lower teeth is not aligned properly, everyday jaw movement like chewing can take a toll on the TMJ and strain the surrounding musculature.

Arthritis – Arthritis can cause uncomfortable inflammation of the TMJ and may also result in swelling in the adjoining tissues, ligaments and muscles. Those with arthritis may experience difficulty opening and closing their mouth, as well as other painful TMJ symptoms.

PHYSICAL THERAPY FOR TMJ

There are many treatments for TMJ. After a thorough and complete examination and profile from your Dentist and Physical Therapist, they can develop a proper treatment plan to help manage TMJ and its resulting symptoms. Some of the Physical Therapy treatments for TMJ are as follows: manual therapy (including various massage techniques), stretching, exercises, activity modification, neuromuscular re-education.

To learn more on how we can help you with the symptoms and discomfort of TMJ for you or a family member , please give our office a call and ask for our TMJ specialist ***Kristin, "K.K."***. Kristin has practiced in various settings gaining a myriad of experience in orthopedic, neurology, sports medicine, aquatic and geriatrics. Her passion for therapy grew and she returned to school where she receive her Doctorate of Physical Therapy from Franklin Pierce University in New Hampshire in 2009. Today she is working at Coppola Physical Therapy with a special interest in low back dysfunction, functional and neurological rehabilitation.

TWO CONVENIENT LOCATIONS:

PHYSICAL THERAPY

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