

Temporal Mandibular Joint (TMJ) Instructions

The TMJ is located just in front of your ear. It includes a the ball-and-socket joint where your jaw attaches to your skull. There is also an intervening disc that allows for smooth movement of your jaw when talking or eating. However, this site can become irritated and inflamed, leading to ear pain or ear fullness or a sense of ear pressure, ringing in the ear, jaw pain and headaches. Following are methods to help with TMJ inflammation :

1. Soft diet for two weeks. Avoid too much chewing. Avoid firm chewy food (i.e., raw vegetables, rare or chewy meat). Avoid opening the mouth wide (ie, avoid large food items such as thick sandwiches, large firm fruits such as apples, pears, etc)
2. No gum chewing
3. Avoid tensing the jaws or grinding the teeth. Avoid "popping the ear by manipulating (opening and closing, or repeatedly "yawning") the jaw; this is actually causing TMJ popping and not clearing the eustachian tubes, and thus may be trading one problem for another. This can lead to ear fullness, sometimes ear pain, sometimes distorted hearing.
4. Warm compress to the TMJ area just in front of the ear.
5. Massage the TMJ area (area just in front of the ear).
6. Anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen (i.e., Motrin, Advil) or naproxen (i.e., Aleve) as needed for pain or discomfort (if these medications are not contraindicated for you). Alternatively, you may take these daily for 1-2 weeks to alleviate any inflammation around the TMJ.
7. Make an appointment with you DENTIST to check for any wear-facets on your teeth. If problems are noticed, then he or she may need to create a mouth appliance to cover your teeth to prevent teeth grinding. This also helps to alleviate problems with the TMJ and prevent future dental problems as well.