

# Bruxism

## Tooth problems while sleeping

Bruxism is the clenching or grinding of the teeth that often occurs while a person is sleeping.

There are many causes of bruxism. Whatever the cause, it is important to treat bruxism early to prevent damage and restore harmony to your mouth.

## Symptoms of bruxism

The symptoms of bruxism include—

- ❖ a sore, tired jaw.
- ❖ difficulty in opening and closing your mouth.
- ❖ sensitive teeth.
- ❖ headaches or earaches.
- ❖ pain in your jaw joints.

It is also possible that you clench and grind your teeth, and yet notice no symptoms at all.



*Bruxism can cause jaw joint pain*



*Nightguard and impression*



*Worn teeth caused by bruxism*

## Dental problems caused by bruxism

When you brux, the force on your teeth is many times greater than during normal chewing. These forces can cause—

- ❖ flattened or worn-down teeth.
- ❖ loss of tooth enamel near the gumline.
- ❖ fractured or loose teeth.
- ❖ damage to the jawbone or jaw joints.

## Diagnosis and treatment

Though all of the causes of bruxism are not known, stress is often a factor. If this is the case, a variety of stress reduction techniques may be recommended. We may also recommend medication to temporarily reduce stress and relieve pain.

Sometimes, missing teeth, worn teeth, spaces between teeth, or teeth that are out of alignment may cause grinding and clenching. In this case, bridges, crowns, equilibration, orthodontics, or other dental treatments can often restore your bite and eliminate grinding and clenching.

A common and effective treatment for stopping the damage caused by bruxism is the use of a nightguard. This is a plastic device that fits over your top or bottom teeth and protects your teeth by absorbing the forces caused by grinding. A custom nightguard, made from models of your teeth, usually offers the most effective and comfortable protection.