

## Before treatment

Your dentist needs to know your medical history to plan the best treatment. Fully disclose any health problems you may have had. Tell the dentist if you have had:

- an allergy or bad reaction to antibiotics, anaesthetics, or other medicines
- previous treatment related to bruxism or jaw surgery
- psychological distress or psychiatric illness.

Give the dentist a list of ALL medicines you are taking or have recently taken. Include medicines prescribed by your family doctor and those bought "over the counter" without prescription.

## Diagnosis of bruxism

Accurate diagnosis is important to ensure the correct treatment. Before starting treatment, your dentist will diagnose your condition based on clinical examination and your medical and dental history. The dentist will note:

- the location of the pain, stiffness or soreness
- range of jaw movement
- any noises in the jaw joint
- your bite, tooth wear and movement of teeth.

To assist diagnosis, your doctor may recommend:

- plaster moulds of your teeth to see if your bite is correctly balanced
- an X-ray examination
- for some patients, completion of a questionnaire and pain diagram to assess how your symptoms affect your quality of life.

This pamphlet is a summary of information

## Talk to your Dentist

about bruxism. It does not contain all known facts about bruxism or its treatment, and is not a substitute for advice from your dentist. Read this pamphlet carefully. Some technical terms are used but don't let this deter you from reading the information.

**The decision to have treatment:** A decision about treatment should be made only after discussion with your dentist. Make a decision only when you are satisfied with the information you have received and believe you have been well informed. Your

## Treatment of bruxism

If your dentist suspects that you have general health problems, he or she may recommend an examination by a medical practitioner.

Your dentist may recommend counselling, stress management or relaxation methods for stress-related causes of bruxism.

Treatment aims to:

- remove the causes of bruxism
- change the behaviour that causes bruxism
- repair the damage that bruxism often causes.

Your dentist may prescribe:

- painkillers for muscular facial pain, headaches and jaw joint pain
- muscle relaxant medication to help relax the jaw muscles.

## Changing bruxism behaviour

Therapy aims to achieve changes in behaviour by teaching the patient how to rest the mouth.

- An occlusal splint (also called a night guard) is an option for someone with mild to severe grinding behaviour. Worn at night, the splint is made from moulded hard plastic that fits over the upper or lower teeth. It prevents further wear of the tooth surfaces.
- Biofeedback is a treatment option for people who primarily clench their teeth during the day. Biofeedback techniques use electronic monitors to measure tension in the jaw muscles. People use the monitors to learn how to

relax their muscles and reduce tension. Newer biofeedback techniques are under development to treat night-time clenching.

- Patients with severe tooth grinding problems often use a combination of splint and biofeedback techniques.
- Some patients may require muscle relaxant tablets at night.

## Repair of damage to teeth

Treatment may be necessary to repair damaged teeth. Dental fillings, crowns or inlays can replace damaged tooth surfaces. Root canal treatment may be required where tooth fractures extend into the pulp. In extreme cases, extraction of badly damaged teeth may be the only option.

Partial dentures, dental bridges or dental implants can replace missing teeth. Orthodontic treatment can realign misplaced and crooked teeth.



An occlusal splint may be recommended to protect upper and lower teeth. To increase comfort and effectiveness, it is custom made to suit each person's own teeth and bite.

## Costs of Treatment

Your dentist can advise you about treatment costs and coverage by private health insurance. Ask for an estimate of fees and any other costs.

Remember this is only an estimate because the actual treatment may differ from that proposed.

The final cost may be different from the original estimate. Discuss costs before treatment rather than afterwards.

## Your Dentist

