

# Mouth Guard Home Care: Instruction

Mouth/Night guards are fabricated and used to reduce damages that may occur to teeth, periodontal tissue and temporomandibular joint from excessive clenching and grinding forces (Clenching & Grinding). There are many different designs of night guards available and can be made from flexible, semi-flexible, and hard polymers. Flexible materials are bulky, porous, stains faster, can retain bacteria and have limited life span. The long term efficiency of soft/flexible night guards is also questionable.

Mouth/ Night guard material is heat treated and fully polymerized so that no free monomers are released when it is in the mouth. The custom fabrication of a mouth/ night guard starts with a precise mold of your upper and lower jaw as well as a jaw registration record. The fabrication process takes approximately one week at the dental laboratory. The fitting and adjusting appointment lasts 30 minutes, and during the fitting appointment, the bite is adjusted in such a way that the excessive pressure is redirected from the weaker teeth to the more stable tooth surfaces. A subsequent appointment is necessary to confirm the precise fit and biting pattern.

## WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN WEARING YOUR NIGHT GUARD

It takes approximately one week to get used to wearing a night guard during your sleep. If you find it hard to sleep at the first night, try to use it for 2-3 hours only when you watch TV or reading newspaper. The second night, increase it to 3-4 hours until you get used to the idea of wearing an appliance during the sleep. You may experience an increase in the saliva flow which will subside in a few days. Wearing a night guard becomes easier with time, and in cases of severe clenching, patients find it hard to fall sleep without wearing the night guard.

You may experience short duration pain (1-2 minutes) when the night guard is removed in the morning. This type of pain should subside within a few days of regular use. You may want to contact our office for an adjustment appointment, if the pain persists or worsens in time.

## HOW TO TAKE CARE OF YOUR MOUTH/ NIGHT GUARD

- Remove your night guards and rinse them under running water.
- Use a mild hand soap detergent and a toothbrush and gently rub the bristles against the night guards. You should do this every morning after you remove your night guard.
- Fill the shallow night guard container with water and drop a denture cleaning tablet into the container and let it fully dissolve into the water. Place your night guard trays into the solution. Soak the trays there for at least 10 to 15 minutes.
- Rinse the night guard thoroughly before use, so that all the residues are removed.
- Hard maxillary night guards may require replacement every 4-6 years depending on the intensity and frequency of clenching and grinding.