



11741 Southwest Highway, Palos Heights, IL 60463 (708) 361-8052

Temporomandibular Joint Disorder (TMJ) 2 of 2

Commitment Physical Therapy accepts most major medical insurance plans, such as Medicare, BlueCross BlueShield, Aetna, Workers Compensation and many more.

We are continuously updating our accepted insurance providers.

You may visit our website at www.commitmentpt.com or contact our office to verify insurance plans.

If you do not see your insurance provider listed please give our office a call. The staff at Commitment Physical Therapy will be happy to assist you with benefit information.

Our Location

Commitment Physical Therapy is located at:

11741 Southwest Highway in Palos Heights.

Our Hours

We are open Monday thru Friday from 9:00am until 5:00pm.

For your convenience, we also offer extended and weekend hours by appointment only.

What treatments are available for TMJ?

Treatments range from simple self-care practices and conservative treatments to injections and surgery. Most experts agree that treatment should begin with conservative, non-surgical therapies first, with surgery left as the last resort. Many of the treatments listed below often work best when used in combination.

Basic treatment for TMJ:

Apply moist heat or cold packs. Apply an ice pack to the side of your face and temple area for about 10 minutes. Do a few simple stretching exercises for your jaw (as instructed by your dentist or physical therapist). After exercising, apply a warm towel or washcloth to the side of your face for about 5 minutes. Perform this routine a few times each day.

Eat soft foods. Eat soft foods such as yogurt, mashed potatoes, cottage cheese, soup, scrambled eggs, fish, cooked fruits and vegetables, beans and grains. In addition, cut foods into small pieces to decrease the amount of chewing required. Avoid hard and crunchy foods (like hard rolls, pretzels, raw carrots), chewy foods (like caramels and taffy) and thick and large foods that require your mouth to open wide to fit.

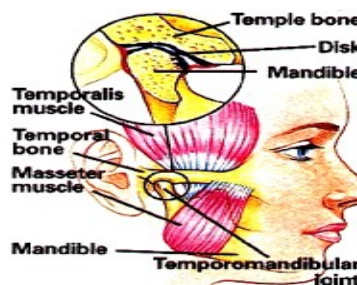
Take medications. To relieve muscle pain and swelling, try nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), such as aspirin

or ibuprofen or (Advil), which can be bought over-the-counter. Your dentist can prescribe higher doses of these or other NSAIDs or other drugs for pain such as narcotic analgesics. Muscle relaxants, especially for people who grind or clench their teeth, can help relax tight jaw muscles. Anti-anxiety medications can help relieve stress that is sometimes thought to aggravate TMJ.

Antidepressants, when used in low doses, can also help reduce or control pain. Muscle relaxants, anti-anxiety drugs and antidepressants are available by prescription only.

Wear a splint or night guard.

Splints and night guards are plastic mouthpieces that fit over the upper and lower teeth. They prevent the upper and lower teeth from coming together, lessening the effects of clenching or grinding the teeth. They also correct the bite by positioning the teeth in their most correct and least traumatic position. The main difference between splints and night guards is that night guards are only worn at night and splints are worn full time (24 hours a day for 7 days). Your dentist will discuss with you what type of mouth guard appliance you may need.



Undergo corrective dental treatments. Replace missing teeth; use crowns, bridges or braces to balance the biting surfaces of your teeth or to correct a bite problem.

Avoid extreme jaw movements. Keep yawning and chewing (especially gum or ice) to a minimum and avoid extreme jaw movements such as yelling or singing.

Don't rest your chin on your hand or hold the telephone between your shoulder and ear. Practice good posture to reduce neck and facial pain.

Keep your teeth slightly apart as often as you can to relieve pressure on the jaw. To control clenching or grinding during the day, place your tongue between your teeth.

Learn relaxation techniques to help control muscle tension in the jaw. Ask your dentist about the need for physical therapy. Consider stress reduction therapy, including biofeedback.

If conservative and non-invasive techniques do not work, you may consider more invasive techniques. A more invasive procedure can be performed in the doctor's office or clinic under local anesthesia. Most people find relief from the pain and return to almost normal. Sometimes, pain medication can be injected into the joint in a similar procedure. Alternatively, a simple injection of cortisone medication can be very helpful in relieving inflammation and pain.

Enjoy The Green!

March is a wonderful month! We are all so lucky to get to enjoy the green grass and see the seedlings start to grow on the trees. With winter now behind us we can focus on watching our green grass growing and perking up in color.

Pretty soon the flowers will be sprouting up and adding their beautiful color to our days. Speaking of flowers, as you start to think about which flowers you will be planting this year, consider annuals. Annuals offer beautiful colors and only need to be planted once and will come back every year, saving you from having to plant each year. Remember the proper body mechanics Dr. Naglaa taught you and take your time when planting. Taking short breaks and enjoying a cool beverage can often help you pace yourself and not overdo it!

Continue: Temporomandibular Joint Disorder (TMJ)

How to use physical therapy to relieve TMJ

Temporomandibular Joint disorder (TMJ) causes pain to nearly 10 million Americans each year. TMJ is often detected by dentists who notice the uneven muscle ability of the facial joint. TMJ is a disorder that is caused by the temporomandibular joint working ineffectively. Follow these steps to find out how TMJ can be treated through physical therapy.

Seek Medical Advice for TMJ

1. Consult a dentist trained in neuromuscular dentistry, you want to find a specialist who can treat, diagnose and care for TMJ.
2. Know that the goal of the dentist is to decrease your pain and increase your ability to function comfortably with the disorder.
3. Ask about dental guards that may be made to custom fit you. These appliances tend to reduce pain from grinding of the jaw that occurs during sleep in TMJ sufferers.
4. Explore the "TMJ Association" Web site to gather more information about symptoms and treatments.

"I was surprisingly impressed. All my visits were great. Dr. Naglaa truly cares! Completing each therapy session reminded me I was one step closer to getting better." T.W., Mokena, IL
 "It was time well spent with a great doctor and great staff."
 E.D., Evergreen Park, IL

Use Physical Therapy to Relieve TMJ Related Headaches

1. Stand in front of a mirror so you can see yourself during the exercises.
2. Open the left side of your mouth as wide as possible and close. Open the right side of your mouth as wide as possible and close.
3. Repeat step up to 10 times. If you notice your mouth pulling towards one side this is normal.
4. Start this next exercise by opening your mouth. When you feel resistance in your jaw use slight pressure by using your hand to help open your mouth just a bit further. Repeat 5 times.
5. Use hot towels pressed against the sides of your face during the exercise to relieve muscle pain if necessary.

Physical therapy for TMJ:

Some of the most common interventions for TMJ:

- Passively opening and closing the jaw and massage therapy.
- Transcutaneous electrical stimulation (TENS): This therapy uses low-level electrical currents to provide pain relief by relaxing the jaw joint and facial muscles.
- Electrical stimulation: helps to decrease pain and increase the

range of motion and strength of the joint.

- **Ultrasound:** Ultrasound treatment is applied to the TMJ to relieve soreness and improve mobility.
- **Laser therapy:** laser sends light (photons) that stimulates healing and reduces pain at TMJ.

Summary: TMJ disorders are treated by a combination of approaches including physical therapy, behavioral changes, dental intervention, and in some cases surgery. At Commitment Physical Therapy, treatment starts with a thorough musculoskeletal and postural evaluation. After identifying relevant findings and contributing factors, we design an individualized treatment plan. Our staff of licensed physical therapists utilizes manual techniques, modalities, exercise and education in the care of our patients. We also provide the latest state-of-the-art equipment including laser, ultrasound, diathermy, electrical stimulation and biofeedback to help speed your recovery. We take every opportunity to educate you in how you can help yourself. We will work with your physician, dentist, orthodontist, or oral surgeon with a team approach.

A last option, surgery, is often irreversible and should be avoided when possible. If necessary, surgery can be used to replace the jaw joints with artificial implants.

Patients' Comments



"I enjoyed talking with everyone there, they were all so nice. I would definitely go back if I needed to." R.B., Chicago, IL

"I have been to physical therapy on several occasions and this one was the highest quality, the combination of professionalism and warmth were great." D.M., Palos Heights, IL