

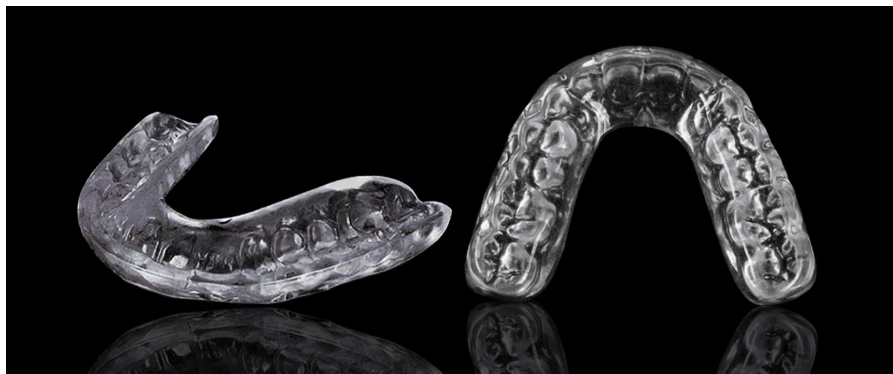
Consent to fabricate a “Bite-Splint” to control the effects of Bruxism

What is a “bite-splint”?



A bite-splint is an appliance that fits over your teeth and prevents biting contact of your teeth to ease the biting pressures between your teeth and more evenly distribute the load. A “bite-splint” is typically made of hard acrylic. This is contrasted with a soft “bite-guard” which is made of a softer biting material.

Bite-splints are variably called Michigan appliances, Tanner appliances, and soft bite guards. In our view, a soft bite guard is not an appropriate long-term bite splint and should only be regarded as a provisional or diagnostic appliance. Bruxism control should be undertaken with a hard-acrylic appliance.



Why has my dentist recommended a “bite-splint”

Your dentist has suggested that you may clench or grind your teeth. This has been identified by analysing several aspects of your jaws and teeth:

- clicking of your jaw joint
- pain in your temples and headaches, particularly on waking
- abnormal deviations of movement of your jaw
- ridging of your tongue and cheek biting, including small blood blisters (‘petechiae’) on the bite line of your cheek
- mobility of your teeth but no gum disease
- wear patterns on your teeth and tooth surface loss
- chipping of the necks of your teeth particularly around your premolars
- loss of the correct tooth guidance of your teeth
- history of tooth fracture



The above signs usually indicate that you suffer from night time bruxism. This is where you may clench and grind your teeth for several hours across the night. This results in an unfavourable bite load distribution across your teeth, and this can result in damage to teeth including tooth loss, not to mention discomfort and pain in the jaws and face.

Whereas some dentists suggest that bruxism is caused by a poor bite, there is little evidence of this. There is more evidence to suggest that this is in fact caused by:

- lifestyle factors such as using 'stimulants' before going to bed e.g. alcohol, tobacco
- bruxism occurs more frequently in individuals who snore, or who suffer from obstructive sleep apnoea
- chronic anxiety and work-related stress e.g. poor work-life balance or dissatisfaction at work
- difficult work patterns and inconsistent work patterns, such as with shift working e.g. pilots, care workers etc that results in stress in inconsistent sleep
- susceptible personality traits and poor personal coping methods

How the bite splint needs to be made.

Your bite-splint will be constructed from a hard-acrylic appliance. If you wish to receive a soft-acrylic appliance, this can be provided, however this will be a temporary appliance. Such an appliance will wear rapidly and will lose the softness and 'resilience' over a few months. This appliance cannot be adjusted at all.

Your dentist will construct a hard bite splint with a non-specific occlusion (the way the bite comes together) simply to minimise the loading of your teeth on each other. The preferred hard bite splint is one designed with a specific occlusion ('gnathologically trimmed'), and this is called a 'stabilisation splint' because it does just that – stabilise your bite and joints. A very specific bite is engineered within this appliance. The bespoke 'stabilisation splint' is the best appliance and requires 2-3 appointments to make, and as a result is a more costly appliance. After the appliance is fitted, within the quoted fee is a single additional visit for review and bite adjustment as necessary. Thereafter, bite adjustments are chargeable.

What the bite-splint will do.

The bite splint will spread the biting load of your teeth across the acrylic appliance and will reduce sending directed loads to individual teeth. There should be less of a chance for teeth to break however this is not guaranteed. The appliance will also separate the articulatory (parts of the joint that slides over each other) surfaces of the jaw joint, and this will allow decompression of the joint space which will provide the worn joint with an improved capacity to heal.



The 'stabilisation splint' will be the best appliance to control not only bruxism, but also to control discomfort associated with muscle tenderness, spasm and headaches that are associated with bruxism.

Headache management.

A bite splint can sometimes be used for certain types of 'tension' headache management. Tension headaches can be caused and exacerbated by bruxism, and this can be reduced when an appropriately designed bite splint controls the loading of the jaws. Please note that a bite splint will not support management of classical migraine (i.e. where you may receive an aura), cluster headaches, or headache as a result of atypical facial pain, and sinusitis.



I confirm that I have read and understood the information contained within this guide, and I have had the opportunity to ask questions. I feel that I understand the risks, benefits and limitations of the procedures described, and I understand that no promises or guarantees of the proposed outcome can be made. By signing this form I am providing my explicit consent to render necessary treatment to assist my dental condition.

Name of Patient _____

Date of Birth _____

Patient signature _____ Dated _____

Parent/Guardian/
Legal Representative _____ Dated _____