



OCCLUSAL SPLINTS

1. **PURPOSE:** This therapy is designed to influence your lower jaw to function freely in its natural anatomic movement in relation to your cranium. Many situations cause malfunctions of your lower jaw; such as accidents, surgery, developmental defects, peculiar oral habits, many fillings placed over numerous years, naturally occurring malocclusion (poor bite), orthodontics, psychologic stress, clenching or bruxing of teeth, and other problems.
2. **RATIONALE:** You have received an occlusal splint. This type of therapy has been used for many years to artificially free the jaws from any tooth related contact, it also allows the lower jaw to return to a comfortable hinge position.
3. **WEARING A SPLINT:** If your disease is *myofacial pain-dysfunction syndrome*, you should wear the splint at all times unless otherwise directed. This includes during eating. The splint eliminates tooth to tooth contact. Your symptoms will gradually disappear while wearing the splint. Your natural teeth, bridges and/or fillings may need to be adjusted to the new bite (occlusal equilibration). After equilibration you will wear your splint only at night. Over a period of time you will not wear the splint at all. The prescribed treatment usually requires a few weeks to several months.
4. **CLEANING SPLINT AND TEETH:** Food will accumulate around and under the splint. At least one time each day brush and floss your teeth very thoroughly. Brush and rinse the inside and outside of the splint and return it to your mouth. Dental decay can be stimulated if you are not careful about cleanliness of your mouth and splint.
5. **WHEN SPLINT IS OUT OF MOUTH:** If the splint is out of your mouth for any reason, your teeth may not occlude (meet) in harmony. This is to be expected because of muscles relaxation while wearing splint. Occlusal equilibration will eliminate this improper meeting of the teeth (malocclusion). If the splint is out of your mouth, place it in a container of water to prevent it from warping. You may desire to soak it occasionally in one of the commercially available denture cleansers or place a few drops of Clorox in water solution.
6. Please call if you have any questions or difficulty.

If your disease is *bruxism* or *clenching*, you should wear your splint only at night when you cannot control jaw movements. During the day make sure your splint is placed in water to avoid warping.