

What causes TMJ pain and how is it treated? - Smile Solutions

Canonical: <https://www.smilesolutions.com.au/dental-articles/article/causes-tmj-jaw-pain/>

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What causes TMJ pain and how is it treated? - Smile Solutions Skip to content Book Appointment Now Our Services General Dentistry Dental Cleans and Hygienists Wisdom Teeth Emergency Dentistry Root Canal Tooth Fillings Chipped or Cracked Teeth TMD & Teeth Grinding Snoring & Sleep Apnoea Sport Mouthguards Dental Anxiety Cosmetic Dentistry Porcelain Veneers & Crowns Same Day Porcelain Veneers™ Composite Bonding Professional Teeth Whitening CEREC Restorations Invisalign No Braces All-on-4® Dental Implants Gummy Smile Complimentary Cosmetic Consultation Orthodontics Invisalign No Braces Orthodontic Braces Children's Braces and Invisalign Jaw Surgery Dental Implants All-on-4® Dental Implants Conventional & Immediate Implants Dental Bridges Bone Grafting For Implants Dentures Specialist Care Prosthodontists Oral & Maxillofacial Surgeons Periodontists Orthodontists Endodontists Paediatric Dentists Complex Dentistry Children's Dentistry First Visit To The Dentist Children's Dental Emergencies Children's Braces and Invisalign Child Dental Benefit Schedule Kids Teeth Cleaning Tips About Us Why Choose Us Our Team Our Location Technology Before & After Gallery Payment Plans Packages & Offers Contact Us Call Us 13 13 96 Smile Solutions 2 Nov 2015 What causes TMJ pain and how is it treated? Firstly, what is TMJ? TMJ stands for temporomandibular joint, which is basically a hinge that connects your jaw to your skull bones in front of each ear. It lets you move your jaw up and down and from side to side, so you can talk, chew and yawn. It is one of the most complicated joints in the whole body! Pain and problems with your jaw and the surrounding muscles in your face that control it are grouped together under the label temporomandibular disorders (TMD), but this group of disorders is also commonly called TMJ, after the joint. What symptoms could I have from TMJ? TMJ can be very painful and the symptoms may be temporary or more permanent. Sufferers of TMJ often complain of: jaw pain or tenderness, especially when the soreness is more prevalent in the morning or late afternoon; facial pain or aching; aches in and around your ear; difficulty chewing or discomfort while chewing; clicking or popping when opening and/or closing the mouth; swelling on the side of the face; sensitive teeth when there are no known dental problems; earache without any infection; upper and lower teeth that do not align properly (malocclusion); stiffness or a 'locked' feeling in the jaw when talking, yawning or eating; jaw pain when chewing, biting or yawning; a changed 'bite'; frequently waking up with headaches or experiencing frequent tension headaches. What causes TMJ? The causes of TMJ are known as 'multifactorial'; people often have a number of problems all contributing to their jaw pain and discomfort. The most common factor in TMJ is a bite problem affecting the joint itself. Interferences and changes in the structure of individual teeth may force movement of the lower jaw, leading the muscles to try to compensate, and this may reposition the joints out of their sockets to try and force the upper and lower teeth to fit together properly. Also, wear and tear on the teeth caused by teeth grinding (bruxism), clenching and aging of the teeth themselves may produce uneven surfaces on the teeth, leading to changes in the bite and hence a unusual jaw movement and closure. Grinding and clenching habits are commonly caused by mental or physical stress, such as the stress and strains of daily life or vigorous exercise. Many people find that they experience increased TMJ problems when they are more stressed. Some TMJ disorders may be caused by arthritis and direct trauma to the jaw joint itself; and then there are those people who seem genetically predisposed to TMJ. What should you do if I have TMJ pain? Rest assured that there is help available. If you are experiencing any TMJ pain, arrange to see a dentist who can promptly diagnose and start treating your problem. All of our general dentists at Smile Solutions are qualified to diagnose and treat most cases of TMJ. In more complex or serious

cases we will refer you to one of our dentists with a special interest in TMJ or one of our own Dental Board-registered specialists. How can we help you? There are a number of ways in which we can help you with your TMJ. Simple therapies The simple act of resting the jaw, applying a warm compress and taking pain medication such as anti-inflammatories can help in a 'flare up' of TMJ pain. Maintaining a soft diet can also help, and you should avoid chewing gum and eating hard or chewy foods. In addition, stress reduction techniques may help you manage your stress and relax your jaw along with the rest of your body. Finally, your dentist can suggest some simple exercises that may give you initial relief from any jaw pain or facial pain. Splint therapy Normally the first line of treatment provided will be the use of a splint. A dental splint (occlusal splint) is a small removable dental appliance made from acrylic specifically moulded to fit the upper or lower arches of your teeth and in most cases it is worn at night. Its purpose is to reduce stress on the jaw, allow the muscles to function optimally and cover any interferences affecting the bite so that the lower jaw can be repositioned properly in the socket. Many types of splint can be fabricated by your dentist. The appliance that is best for you will be decided based on clinical findings, symptoms and diagnostic tests performed during a comprehensive examination by the dentist. Either a hard or a soft splint will normally be provided. Occlusal equilibration If any interferences are affecting the bite and causing an irregular jaw closure, you may be treated with 'occlusal equilibration', or your dentist may elect to treat the bite with an occlusal splint. Occlusal equilibration involves simple smoothing, or reshaping, of the biting surfaces of the teeth with fillings, or with crowns in some cases. It is often the best choice for eliminating interferences so that the jaw muscles can function properly. If there is a structural disorder within the joint itself, further investigation may be necessary to ensure that an accurate diagnosis is made before treatment. At Smile Solutions we have invested in the latest technology in the form of digital 3D imaging and our own panoramic X-ray machine. This sophisticated equipment will enable our practitioners to assess the bony areas of the joint and socket to clearly see any structural problems you may have. Depending on what these images reveal, we can recommend any other necessary treatments, such as orthodontic treatment at our specialist centre in the awe-inspiring tower of the Manchester Unity Building, which is our home. This treatment can bring your teeth into a more 'stable' alignment, allowing the jaw to sit correctly in its joint. Alternatively you may be referred, if necessary, to one of our specialist oral & maxillofacial surgeons who will further evaluate and treat your TMJ condition. Surgical treatment Rarely prescribed for TMJ conditions, surgery is considered as a last resort after all other conservative treatment options have been attempted. If you have a TMJ problem, please don't hesitate to call our reception team on 13 13 96 and we will arrange an appointment as soon as possible to treat you.

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