



Bite

Word of mouth

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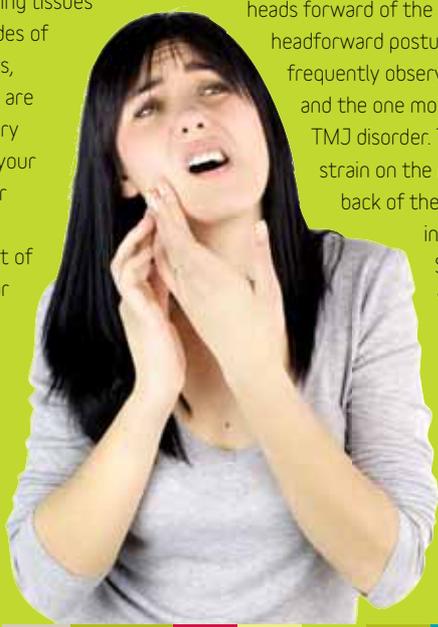
Featured

Posture and teeth grinding—TMJ problems

Troubled by jaw pain? If you've tried everything from correcting your bite and relaxing your jaw at night to addressing bad habits like biting your fingernails, you should take a look at your posture. In fact, posture is such an overlooked contributor to TMJ disorder, you should consider it sooner rather than later.

The major symptoms of TMJ (that's short for temporomandibular joint) disorder include aches and pain in the jaw, along with headaches, neck pain and sometimes locking of the joint. TMJ symptoms occur when the joints that hinge your lower jaw to your skull malfunction, causing stress and inflammation on the surrounding tissues and nerves. Located at the sides of your head in front of your ears, the temporomandibular joints are busy throughout the day every time you speak, eat, or move your mouth. This activity gives your TM joints a full workout, and anything that moves them out of alignment puts additional wear and tear on the joint tissues.

Other symptoms of TMJ disorder can include—ringing in the ears, jaws that make popping or clicking noises when you open them, difficulty or pain when chewing and dizziness.



How does bad posture affect the TMJ?

Our bodies function best when all of the joints move in proper alignment. For the head, neck, shoulders and jaw, this means the ears should be held vertically in line with the spine and shoulders. But some people develop a habit of holding their heads forward of the shoulders. Known as the headforward posture, this is one of the most frequently observed types of bad posture and the one most likely to contribute to TMJ disorder. This posture puts excessive strain on the muscles and joints in the back of the neck and increases tension in the upper trapezius muscle. Since these muscles connect with and influence the activity of the jaw muscles, TMJ disorder is likely to occur along with the head-forward postures.

Therefore, a key solution in the treatment of TMJ disorder is to, in fact, correct your posture. If bad posture is an ingrained

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This month...

You may notice that things are a bit out of place as we continue our renovations—we thank you for your patience, it will be done soon! In the meantime, I've returned from another round of exams for my Masters in Prosthetic Dentistry and am happy to have another semester behind me!

This month we discuss a topic that you may think is removed from dental health but in fact is fundamental to jaw function—posture. We are proud to work with allied health practitioners to provide comprehensive care that goes beyond just your teeth.

Finally, we have a fun freebie and Jenna has a tip for parents of kids that try to cheat at their toothbrushing. They won't get away with this one!

Dr Simon Franks



> continued

habit or the result of prolonged positioning for example, spending hours hunched over the computer it may not be as simple as 'sitting up straight.' An assessment of your joint and spinal alignment will determine if any remedial adjustments are required. Consulting with a physiotherapist or chiropractor is often recommended to ensure that musculoskeletal malalignments can be corrected before progressing with exercises. This is important because if one begins exercises when the spinal alignment is out, this can make the postural problem and symptoms worse.

Fortunately, posture exercises that retrain, stretch and strengthen your muscles are simple to do. Doing these exercises regularly will help you develop body awareness and improve your ability to move in proper alignment and maintain a healthy posture.

Overall, it's important to appreciate that our health and body systems are very interrelated. This is especially true

for the head and neck region of the body. At Bite Dental, we work closely with chiropractors and head and neck physios to manage TMJ disorders in a multi-disciplinary manner. In the same way, TMJ disorder can result in headaches causing muscle tension and lead to posture malalignment—so it goes both ways!

That's why at our check-up visits we assess more than just your teeth. We take the time to assess the whole head and neck region, orofacial features and posture. You may wonder why your dentist is palpating your neck—this strong interconnection is why! Oral health goes beyond just your teeth. So next time you're in the practice be sure to ask about your jaw and take note of any symptoms. Remember that you don't need to put up with headaches. Headaches are not normal—there is always any underlying cause and your dentist is actually a good person to start that conversation with!



Celebrate everyday heros. Let us know if you have a cause you'd like us to shout about.

Community

Free first aid for teeth

If you're sporty, have kids or a physical job—then this one's for you! Accidents happen and there is poor information floating about so knowing the correct thing to do can make the difference between saving or losing a tooth. Would you know what to do?

To make things easy the Bite Team have produced a free and fun poster which outlines the right steps to take in an emergency. If you're involved in kids activities it's a great resource to print and put up in the classroom, scout den or sports centre. You can download it from our website:

<http://bit.ly/1jC8bkC>



Team

Sleeping is part of our job

Julia has been busy completing some additional studies this year in the very interesting area of sleep dentistry. She also spends one day a week working across the hall at Oventus which fabricate sleep dental devices that control sleep apnoea, snoring and grinding. So if you have any questions about sleep apnoea or snoring—ask Julia when you are next in the Studio!



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Healthy Hygiene Hints

Lying through their teeth?

When you're unsure if your child has brushed their teeth when asked, plaque disclosing tablets are a fantastic way to check up and monitor their brushing habits. Disclosing tablets are used to make dental plaque visible. The tablets contain a dye (typically vegetable) that stains plaque a bright colour (usually red). Simply chew a tablet and rinse.

The idea is to continue brushing until there is no more coloured debris. It's great for providing feedback to improve brushing technique.

Colgate and Curasept make some good ones available at the pharmacy or we also have some at the Studio.

Jenna



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