



# Bruxism

For your dental health.

## What is bruxism?

Bruxism is the clenching or grinding of your teeth while you are asleep. It is not just an annoyance; it exerts thousands of pounds of pressure on the biting surfaces of the teeth, which can lead to jaw pain and damage to your teeth, as well as to the surrounding bone, gums, and jaw joint. Left untreated, bruxism can cause:



*Worn teeth due to bruxism*

- Jaw pain, earaches and headaches
- Fractured or chipped teeth or fillings
- Loosened teeth
- Damage to the bone that surrounds your teeth
- Damage to the jaw joint (the TMJ)
- Tooth sensitivity as the enamel layer is worn down, exposing the more sensitive dentin layer
- Worn-down teeth

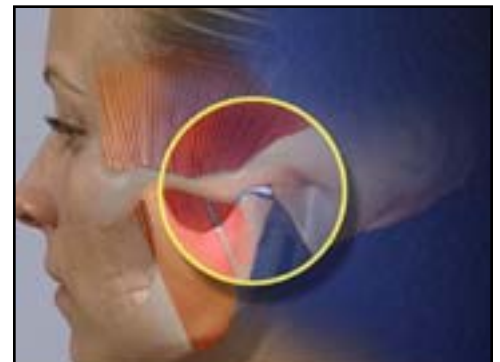
## What causes bruxism? How is it treated?

Grinding and clenching your teeth can be a response to stress. There are a variety of stress-reducing techniques that may be helpful, or we might recommend medication to temporarily reduce stress. Medication may also be prescribed to relieve pain and soreness. A bad bite (called malocclusion), spaces between teeth, or worn teeth may also cause you to clench and grind your teeth. Braces, crowns, bridges, or other dental restorations can correct your bite and eliminate the clench-and-grind pattern.

We may also recommend that you use a nightguard, a plastic device worn at night that fits over either your bottom or top teeth. It helps eliminate the irregularities of a bad bite and protects your teeth from the damage caused by grinding.

Nightguards are custom-crafted to fit your teeth. First, we make an impression of your teeth that we use to create models. It is on these models that your nightguard is created. At your next appointment, you will try on your nightguard, and adjust it for a precise fit.

Without treatment, the constant clenching and grinding of your teeth can cause widespread damage in your mouth. Dealing with the problem early can restore harmony and prevent many future problems.



*The TMJ*



*A model is used to create a nightguard*