

BRUXISM



Bruxism: What and Why?

Bruxism (grinding) affects millions in North America each year. According to the American Dental Association, approximately 95% of Americans experience bruxism at some point in their lives. However, only about 15 % of people have a regular habit of grinding their teeth or clenching their jaws. Without treatment, grinding seriously damages the tooth surface, leaving the dentition vulnerable to fractures, erosion, and even changes in facial appearance. Most people grind or clench their teeth in their sleep, so it often goes undetected until a family member hears the grinding sound or a dentist notices symptoms.

Many patients do not realize that they have bruxism. However, when their dentist explains the consequences of their ailment to them, most patients want to immediately begin preventive therapy. Chair side solutions recently have been developed to meet the immediate and long-term needs of all bruxers.

There are many factors that can contribute to bruxism. These include stress, anxiety, anger, pain and frustration. Certain sleep disorders can trigger bruxism as well. People who are competitive, aggressive and feel rushed may also be at greater risk. Using alcohol and some types of medications also may worsen teeth grinding.

Bruxism can cause the following effects:

- Wear down tooth enamel
- Chip teeth
- Increase temperature sensitivity
- Erode gums and supporting bones
- Break fillings or other dental work
- Worsen temporomandibular joint dysfunction (TMJ)
- Result in cosmetic damage.

Bruxism or teeth grinding is common in children. Three out of ten kids will grind or clench their teeth. They may grind their teeth in response to jaw growth, losing or getting in new teeth, or the pain and discomfort of other ailments such as ear infections. Teeth grinding is usually a passing phenomena in children and most outgrow it by the time they reach adolescence.

When bruxism is serious enough to damage the teeth or cause jaw or facial pain in adults, dentists can fit patients with plastic mouth guards to be worn at night. These night guards are designed to prevent grinding during sleep.

For more information please feel free to contact our office at 905-508-2244.

Any of our team members would be more than happy to show you a sample night guard or answer any questions.