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TEMPORAL MANDIBULAR JOINT SYNDROME (TMJ)

General information:

- ◆ The TMJ (temporal mandibular joint) connects the jaw to the skull just below the ears.
- ◆ Movement of the joint is up, down as well as sliding forward and back.
- ◆ Three general types of TMJ dysfunction are seen:
 1. Myofascial pain-essentially muscle spasm and tension
 2. Internal derangement-the joint disc is dislocated or problematic
 3. Degenerative joint disease-arthritis of the joint
- ◆ TMJ disorder affects as many as 10 million Americans per year.
- ◆ Women are affected four times more often than men.
- ◆ TMJ disorder most often occurs during the ages of 20-40.

Symptoms of TMJ:

- ◆ Chronic dull ache in front of the ear, worsening with chewing.
- ◆ Pain may radiate to the ear-we call this referred pain: your ear is normal.
- ◆ Ear clicking or popping when chewing
- ◆ Headache/neck ache
- ◆ Abnormal bite
- ◆ Chronic teeth clenching or grinding
- ◆ History of facial or jaw trauma

Evaluation for TMJ:

- ◆ Physical examination
- ◆ Occasionally blood work is required.
- ◆ Imaging can consist of plain films, CT scans and/or MRI.

Treatment for TMJ:

- ◆ Consultation with an oral surgeon may be required.
- ◆ Medications include many categories of anti-inflammatory medications.
- ◆ Muscle relaxants such as valium may also be used.
- ◆ Rare cases require use of narcotic pain medications.
- ◆ For certain patients anti-depressants or migraine medications may be used.
- ◆ Alternative treatment of massage and/or chiropractic care may be considered.

Surgery for TMJ:

- ◆ Surgery is available for TMJ syndrome depending on the cause.
- ◆ This surgery is generally done by an oral surgeon.
- ◆ Appropriate referrals can be made if necessary.

See Reverse side for NI ENT conservative treatment measures for TMJ

Conservative Treatment Recommended by the Office:

To rest the joint, jaw motion should be kept to a minimum. Try to avoid:

- ◆ Yelling
- ◆ Opening mouth widely
- ◆ Clenching the teeth
- ◆ Chewing gum
- ◆ Hard Foods
- ◆ Yawning (If yawning cannot be avoided, keep the lips closed as you yawn.)

The following can help with pain:

- ◆ Heat. Apply a heating pad to the jaw joint 3 times a day for 1/2 hour.
- ◆ Massage. After applying heating pad, gently massage the area above and in front of the ear.
- ◆ Soft Diet. Changing the consistency of the food you eat from hard to soft will reduce strain on the jaw joint.
- ◆ Medication. For an adult, 1 or 2 aspirin (325mg) or Tylenol (500mg) can be taken every 4-5 hours to relieve pain. Alternatively, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory medication such as ibuprofen can be used per dosing recommendations noted on the bottle.