

NIGHTGUARDS

Teeth Grinding, or Bruxism

Many people grind their teeth, usually while they sleep. In mild cases, they may never realize it's happening because symptoms are minimal and go unnoticed. Sometimes, however, the grinding is strong enough to cause troubling symptoms. The most common are:

- Dull headaches when awakening
- Sore jaw muscles
- Tooth pain when chewing
- Clicking sound coming from the mouth while sleeping

In more extreme cases, grinding can also result in:

- Loose teeth
- Excessive tooth wear and fractures
- Damage to crowns and fillings
- Causing or worsening temporomandibular joint (TMJ) disorder
- Altered facial appearance

Causes of Bruxism

The most common cause of teeth grinding is stress. Reduce or eliminate the stress and the grinding problem will usually be solved. Stress relief can be accomplished with counseling, exercise, meditation, physical therapy or prescription muscle relaxants. Bruxism may also be caused by a sleep disorder.

Protecting Teeth with a Night Guard

The doctor can create a custom night guard that will effectively prevent teeth and dental restorations from becoming worn or broken. The night guard will fit comfortably in your mouth usually on your lower teeth and prevent grinding from damaging your teeth while you sleep. In addition, teeth grinding can be reduced in some cases by:

- Avoiding the consumption of caffeine and alcohol
- Not "training" jaws to clench by chewing on non-food items or chewing gum
- Consciously relaxing the jaws during the day

For more information about teeth grinding and treatment, including a custom night guard, please contact us. We'll be happy to answer your questions.