

## NIGHT GUARD FOR BRUXISM

### I. PURPOSE

About one third of people brux (grind or clench) their teeth. Many of these people do so subconsciously and are surprised when some of the negative effects listed below are shown to them in their mouth. If a person has lost bone support around their teeth, it is traumatic to also grind or clench.

The purpose of a night guard is to reduce the negative effects of bruxism. These negative effects can include:

- |                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| A. mobile teeth        | F. teeth with a shock or bounce on them (fremitis) |
| B. drifting teeth      | G. recession or clefting of the gum tissue         |
| C. wear of teeth       | H. "v" shaped erosions in the root surfaces        |
| D. increased bone loss | I. muscle soreness or stiffness                    |
| E. joint clicking      | J. joint soreness or stiffness                     |

### II. RATIONALE

Why do people brux their teeth? It is usually hard to determine. Normally teeth are only together about six minutes per day. A bruxer may have their teeth in contact for hours a day. It is a habit. People who do clench or grind do so more in times of stress. While one is awake, one can tell oneself to relax their jaws. One cannot say, "I am not going to grit my teeth tonight," just as one cannot say, "I am not going to snore tonight." Therefore, a night guard is worn to prevent teeth from contacting forcefully while one is asleep.

### III. CARE OF YOUR SPLINT AND TEETH

While the night guard is out of the mouth, store it in water to keep it clean. A few drops of clorox in the water or a commercial denture cleaner can be used to kill germs and remove stains. The Protech Denture Cleaner given to you when the night guard is delivered is available from Practicon Dental, 1-800-959-9505. Use a toothbrush to clean inside the night guard. Be careful not to drop the guard in the sink or on a tile floor; it might break. If the guard is not in your mouth, keep it safe in the water container, so it isn't chewed up by the dog, stepped on, or lost.

Take your night guard with you every time you go to your dentist. If your dentist does an upper filling or crown, he/she will do a very simple plastic relining of the one tooth area. If your dentist does a lower filling or crown, he/she will need to check the bite with the surface of the night guard.

### IV. WEARING THE NIGHT GUARD

The greatest majority of people are surprised how quickly they adapt to wearing the night guard. Within a few days most find they forget it is in their mouth. In fact, many people are pleased that they sleep better. The joint and muscles are given a rest. Sometimes even related problems like headaches, neck aches, joint pain, and face muscle soreness, and ear ringing decrease. If these problems persist after wearing the night guard, referral to a temporomandibular joint specialist is advised.

If you have any problems with your night guard, call the office. Often minor modifications can help you very much.

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