

ADA Healthy Smile Tips

- Brush your teeth twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste.
- Clean between your teeth once a day.
- Eat a balanced diet and limit snacks.
- Visit your dentist regularly.

For more information about taking care of your mouth and teeth, visit MouthHealthy.org, the ADA's website just for patients.



Bruxism and bite guard photos courtesy of Dr. William J. Moorhead, www.flemingsburgdental.com

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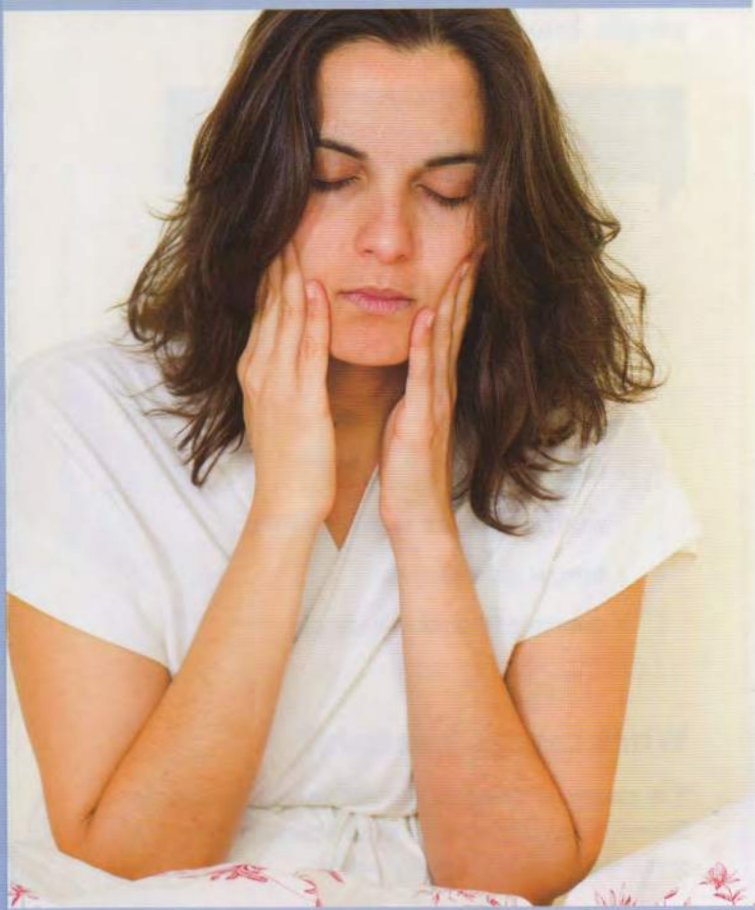
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Do You Grind Your Teeth?

HOW TO PREVENT AND TREAT BRUXISM



ADA American Dental Association®
America's leading advocate for oral health

Bruxism is a habit of grinding or clenching the teeth. Clenching means you tightly hold your top and bottom teeth together. Grinding is when you slide your teeth back and forth over each other. Bruxism can happen in children and adults of any age.

Many people with bruxism wake themselves up during the night with a loud clenching or grinding sound. Sometimes the sound is so loud that other people can hear it. For other people, bruxism may be silent.

People who suffer from bruxism may have one or more of these symptoms:

- headache or earache
- sore jaw
- jaw clicking
- frequent toothaches
- sensitive teeth
- facial pain
- worn or cracked teeth or fillings
- tongue indentations
- insomnia (trouble sleeping)

What causes bruxism?

The causes of bruxism are not known for certain. Stress, sleep disorders and an abnormal bite are some things that may play a role.

Your dentist can diagnose bruxism by checking for unusual wear spots on your teeth and looking at any related symptoms. Regular dental checkups are important to find damage in the early stages. Your dentist can help you manage bruxism and the related symptoms, as well as repair your teeth if necessary and help prevent further damage.

How is bruxism treated?

Treatment depends on each person's situation. Your dentist may recommend one or more treatments, such as the following:

- stress reduction methods
- a protective nightguard worn over the teeth while sleeping
- medication for pain or muscle spasms
- exercises to relax jaw muscles
- fillings or other dental treatment to repair damaged teeth

Your dentist may recommend that you wear a nightguard during sleep. Nightguards are custom-made by your dentist from plastic or acrylic. The nightguard slips over the upper or lower teeth and prevents them from touching. It protects teeth and helps keep them from wearing down.

Since bruxism has many causes, you may need to try a few different treatments to find out what works for you. You can help manage bruxism by paying attention to the symptoms, having regular dental visits and talking with your dentist.



Teeth worn by bruxism



Custom-made night guards protect teeth from wear.