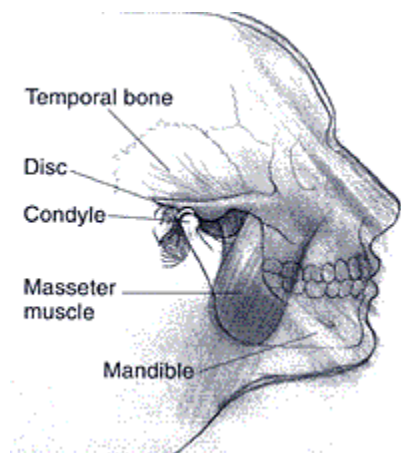


JAW PAIN

The TMJ is located directly in front of your ear, below your temple and is a part of the body that we use many times during the day when we talk, yawn, chew food etc., but are only aware of it if it becomes painful.



SYMPTOMS

- Ear pain
- Sore jaw muscles
- Temple/cheek pain which occurs when you swallow, yawn, talk or chew
- Jaw popping/clicking when the jaws are open wide
- Locking of the jaw

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- Difficulty in opening the mouth fully
- Frequent head/neck aches with muscle spasms
- Ringing in the ears

The pain of TMJ dysfunction may be sharp and searing, or it may be dull and constant. It can be extremely debilitating.



THINGS THAT CAN GO WRONG WITH THE TMJ

In most patients, the pain of TMJ dysfunction is caused by the cartilage disc in the joint moving out of place and causing pressure on sensitive structures around the joint. If the TMJ pops or clicks, this is the disk snapping into place when the jaw moves. In addition, the chewing muscles may spasm, not function efficiently, and cause pain and tenderness

Both major and minor trauma to the jaw can cause the development of TMJ problems. If you habitually clench, grit, or grind your teeth, you increase the wear on the cartilage lining of the joint, and it doesn't have a chance to recover. This can be caused by grinding the teeth at night, chewing gum much of the day, as well as stress and other psychological factors which tend to make you tense. Other causes include teeth that do not fit together properly (improper bite), malpositioned jaws, and arthritis. The TMJ is frequently injured during motor vehicle or other accidents which cause a whiplash.

TREATMENT

Your Physiotherapist can help by teaching you relaxation and stretching exercises and manually mobilizing the joint and surrounding soft tissues. The symptoms can also be eased by making changes in your life such as:

- Rest the muscles and joints by eating soft foods
- Do not chew gum
- Avoid clenching or tensing
- Relax muscles with moist heat or ice
- Develop relaxation skills to specifically target the TMJ muscles