

**David E. Peters, D.D.S., M.S., P.C.**  
**TMD & CRANIOFACIAL PAIN**

1028 North Karwick Road, Michigan City, In. 46360

Phone: (219) 872-5800/Cell: (219) 902-9617

---

**HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR YOUR SPLINT**

**To Remove:** Use both hands to remove your splint. With your fingertips or fingernails, pull up or down on the back outside edges of the splint. Do not flip it up with your tongue.

**To Replace In Your Mouth:** Use both hands to insert your splint. Place the splint over your teeth in the correct alignment and push into place with your thumbs or forefingers. Do not “bite” the splint into place.

**To Clean:** Remove the splint when you brush and floss your teeth and brush it with your toothpaste. Be sure to support the splint evenly while brushing. For removal of odor and stains, soak the splint in any of the following solutions, and then brush it again with your toothpaste. Always rinse the splint well with cool water before inserting it to remove any residue of toothpaste or denture cleaner.

- (a) 2 vinegar and 2 cool tap water for 20-30 minutes
- (b) 2 tablespoons of baking soda in 2 cups tap water for 20-30 minutes
- (c) cool tap water and a denture cleaning solution like Polident or Efferdent for 15 minutes
- (d) 2 bleach and 2 water for 15 minutes once a month for stubborn stains, then use (a) or (b) to remove chlorine taste
- (e) cool tap water and a tablespoon of medicinal hydrogen peroxide (3%)

**Note:** Heat will cause your splint to warp. Therefore, do not use hot water when cleaning the splint. If the water is too hot for your fingers, it is too hot for your splint. Do not leave your splint in a hot car or next to a heater, hot rollers, curling iron, etc. However, as long as your splint is in position in your mouth, hot food or drink will not damage it.

**Special Notes:**

1. When you are not wearing the splint, rinse it and place it in the case we have given you. Keeping the splint wet will keep it from changing in shape. (A dry splint is much more likely to fracture.) If unable to moisten the splint during the day, simply take a cotton ball and wet with water or mouthwash (not a red colored mouthwash) and squeeze it out. Then place the splint and cotton ball in your container. This will keep your splint moist for the day.
2. (a) Be sure to wear your splint all the time and remove it only to eat, brush and floss your teeth **UNLESS TOLD OTHERWISE**. It is especially important that you wear it when you are concentrating on something like driving, paperwork, sports, exercising, sleeping or any physical activity, etc. These times are when you are most likely to subconsciously grind your teeth. (Remove splint 10-15 minutes before meals to make chewing easier.)  
  
(b) At all times try to condition yourself to keep your teeth slightly apart, even when wearing the splint. Your teeth should touch only when you swallow or eat. Separating your teeth will help your muscles to relax and reduce the stress on the jaw joints. Remember, your splint is not a “chew toy”.  
  
(c) You may find that you have more saliva or less saliva in your mouth. This is your mouth getting used to having something in it all the time. In time this should return to normal.

(Over)

- (d) You probably will have sore teeth, sore TM joints, a sore tongue and some muscle pain after getting your splint. This is only the muscles and your teeth becoming accustomed to the splint. These symptoms should subside in a few days. If in five or six days they do not subside, please call us.
  - (e) We make every effort to be sure your new splint is as smooth as possible when we place it. However, your tongue is much more sensitive than our gloved fingers. After you leave, you may find a rough spot on the splint. If it is on the cheek side or the tongue side, you may lightly smooth the rough area with the fine side of a nail file or emery board. Do not do anything to the biting surface of the splint, as that is how we balance your bite. (If you develop sores in your mouth, use Zilactin to make an "oral bandage". This can be purchased over-the-counter at most pharmacies.)
  - (f) After each adjustment to your splint, you may have some discomfort or feel your bite is off for a day or two as you get used to the new position. However, if the discomfort or feeling that your bite is off lasts four days, please call our office.
3. The best way to learn to speak with your splint is to start right away enunciating more dramatically and reading or singing aloud to practice. It may take a few days to become accustomed to speaking with it. Remember, you sound worse to yourself than you do to others.
  4. You should brush after each meal. Since the splint covers your teeth and gums, your tongue is unable to remove any food particles and we do not want you to develop cavities or gum problems. When you brush your teeth, also take time to brush your appliance.
  5. Be careful with your splint. Keep your splint away from dogs! Dogs love to chew on splints. Try not to drop your splint as it might break. Never wrap the splint in a paper napkin or tissue and lay it on the table. Someone might throw it away. Don't put it in your pocket because you might break or lose it. Avoid flipping the splint with your tongue as that can damage your splint.
  6. (a) Please consult with us if any dental work or care is required. Extensive dental work may change the fit of your splint and require a replacement. Minor dental work will require alterations to your splint.
    - (b) If dental work is necessary during your splint therapy, tell your dentist you are being treated for TM joint dysfunction. Ask the dentist to give you frequent rest breaks. Also, do not open very wide especially for long periods of time. We also suggest you use moist heat on the sides of your face before and after your dental visits. This will help with any discomfort in the muscles and joints that might occur because of the dental work.

If you have any problems or additional questions after you leave our office, please feel free to call us. We want this to be as pleasant an experience for you as possible and are anxious to assist you in adjusting to this therapy.