

## Ask The Smile Expert...



### What is Bruxism?

40 million Americans are bruxers and many of us are totally unaware that we do it. Some of us grind our teeth, others clench their teeth. Sometimes it is a result of tension and anxiety. But can also be the result of poor tooth alignment, missing teeth, muscle imbalances or joint instability. Sometimes it is simply a habit.

The symptoms of bruxism can include, but are not limited to, unexplained headaches in the morning, facial pain, cracked teeth, broken fillings, injured gums and pain in the jaw joint.

Counseling may be needed for unmanageable stress and anxiety. Self-relaxation techniques are sometimes enough to control it. Cutting down on caffeine and tobacco can help. A bite splint can decrease grinding, relieve pressure on the jaw joints and prevent further tooth damage. Hot compresses can help sore facial muscles. If the cause is due to dental problems, you may need to have your bite adjusted, teeth realigned orthodontically or replace missing teeth. Children 3-10 years old often grind their teeth, but this usually stops by age 13 without treatment.

If you are having problems with bruxism, let your dentist know so they can discuss treatment options with you!

*Please feel free to submit a question for *The Smile Expert* thru our website at [www.drpatricialondon.com](http://www.drpatricialondon.com). We look forward to providing you with helpful information to improve your quality of life and your understanding of dentistry.*

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