Do You Grind Your Teeth?

How to Prevent and Treat Bruxism

Bruxism is a habit of grinding or clenching the teeth. Clinching 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. We can diagnose bruxism by checking for unusual wear spot on your teeth and looking at any related symptoms. Regular dental checkups are important to find damage in the early stages. We 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. We may recommend one of 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 crowns to repair damaged teeth

We may recommend that you wear a nightguard during sleep. Nightguards are custom-made 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 us.

Teeth worn by bruxism