

# TMJ...TEMPOROMANDIBULAR JOINT DISORDER

**TMD stands for Temporomandibular Disorder.** This refers to problems with the muscles and joints that join the lower jaw to the temporal bone at the base of the skull.

TMD, sometimes called TMJ, is a cycle of pain, muscle spasms, and jaw joint problems that results when the teeth, chewing muscles, and jaw joints don't work together harmoniously.

## Symptoms of TMD

Symptoms may include one or more of the following: headaches, worn teeth, painful muscles in the face, neck, and shoulders, clicking and popping of the jaw joint, earaches, pain behind the eyes, difficulty opening and closing the mouth, ringing in the ears, dizziness, pain with chewing, bite feels off, broken teeth and dental work, tired, tight jaws, scalp tenderness, tingling hands, and other problems.



*Dr. Mallonee graduated from the University of California, San Francisco, in 1980. Her practice, in Corona del Mar, California, focuses on functional cosmetics, comprehensive dentistry, as well as on laser, implant, orthodontics, and temporomandibular joint disorder. She is a member of the American Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry, American Dental Association, Academy of General Dentistry, International Association of Orthodontists, California Dental Association, Orange County Dental Association, and the Newport Beach & Corona del Mar Chamber of Commerce. She is also a graduate of the Las Vegas Institute for Advanced Dental Studies.*



The temporomandibular joint is one of the most frequently used of all body joints and also one of the most complex. It is located in the jaw and controls chewing, swallowing, speech and communication. A small disc of cartilage separates the bones, allowing the jaw to slide smoothly up and down. Slippage or movement of this disc in the jaw joint throws the lower jaw out of balance with the upper jaw. This stresses nerves, muscles, tendons, and ligaments of the head and neck. The dislocation of the disc can cause an imbalance and pain in other parts of the body that are placed under the burden of trying to protect the injured joint.

## Having Dental Treatment in the Near Future?

Undiagnosed jaw joint and muscle pathology can destroy the most carefully placed restorations and can flare up as joint dysfunction, muscle spasm and pain. Finding the correct position for your jaw will improve the look, health and feel of your restorations.

Generally, a malfunction of one or both jaw joints is caused by trauma, whiplash, bad bite, patch-work dentistry, poor posture, teeth grinding or skeletal malformation. It is estimated that one in every four people suffers from TMJ symptoms.

## Diagnosis and Treatment

Fortunately, TMD is treatable. Dr. Mallonee is one of a small number of dentist trained to use the most current, proven and non-invasive diagnostic equipment available to help identify your particular situation and treatment needs. This encompasses leading technologies used to diagnose TMJ problems and to monitor treatment progress.

Millions of people suffer from TMD, but with treatment, we can relieve pain and restore harmony to the teeth, muscles, and jaw joint.

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