



TMJ Disorder

TMJ (temporomandibular joint) disorders are a wide range of problems related to your complex jaw joint. If you have symptoms like pain or a "popping" or "clicking" sound, these problems are more easily diagnosed and treated than they were in the past. These symptoms occur when the joints of the jaw and the chewing muscles (muscles of mastication) do not work together correctly. TMJ stands for Temporomandibular Joint, which is the name for each joint (right and left) that connects your jaw to your skull. Since some types of TMJ problems can lead to more serious conditions, early detection and treatment are important.

No one treatment can resolve TMJ disorders completely and treatment takes time to become effective. Drs. Morrison & Kempers can help you have a healthier and more comfortable jaw.

Treatment

We work with a team approach. Physical therapy and splint therapy are used extensively. Most problems can be eliminated without any surgery. These initial treatment options can improve the harmony and function of your jaw. Once an evaluation confirms a diagnosis of TMJ disorder, we will work with other practitioners to establish a treatment plan. It is important to note that treatment always works best with a team approach of self-care joined with professional care.

Stress management techniques such as biofeedback or physical therapy may also be recommended, as well as a temporary, clear plastic appliance known as a splint. An occlusal splint fits over your top or bottom teeth and helps keep your teeth apart, thereby relaxing the muscles and reducing pain. There are different types of appliances used for different purposes. A splint helps you stop clenching or grinding your teeth and reduces muscle tension at night and helps to protect the cartilage and joint surfaces.

Surgical options such as arthrocentesis, arthroscopy and open joint repair restructuring are sometimes needed but are reserved for severe cases. We do not recommend surgery unless all other options have been exhausted.