
Oral Appliance Care Instructions

What to Expect

Initially when inserting your Oral Appliance, you will experience dry mouth, or excess salivation. In the case of dry mouth, you can keep a water bottle with a straw at bedside. The sport bottles that squirt into your mouth work best. Also, you may purchase a mouth rinse for dry mouth, called Biotene. You can add Biotene to a small spray bottle and spray your mouth and your Oral Appliance before inserting it. This will coat your mouth and help prevent dry mouth.

Care of Oral Appliances

Oral appliances are easy to care for but they do have to be cleaned regularly. Each morning, simply brush it with a toothbrush and non- alcohol mouth rinse or mild soap and water. Rinse with cool water thoroughly. Some Oral Appliances can be stored in tap water, please consult individual lab recommendations. If you purchased a Sanitizer case place appliance in Sanitizer case, after the appliance is completely dry, push button to start. Be sure it is up, out of the way, where no curious dogs can chew on it! Also avoid extremes of temperature, especially heat, since the appliance may distort. Do not leave the appliance in direct sunlight. Examine your appliance frequently and call the office if you observe any broken areas.

Monitoring Progress

Like CPAP, oral appliance therapy for snoring and sleep apnea is not a cure. The dental device must be worn every night for it to be effective. Your progress with the oral appliance should be monitored over time to ensure that the appliance continues to do its job in providing relief of snoring and sleep apnea and to ensure that you remain symptom free. The doctor will carefully follow and guide your progress throughout your treatment. You will be seen in the office several times to ensure acceptance, comfort and effectiveness of the therapy. Instructions will be given on proper adjustment of the appliance and any areas of discomfort will be addressed. The objective will be to resolve the snoring and daytime tiredness through gently and gradually repositioning the lower jaw. Your personal feedback and several simple in-home dental sleep studies will provide guidance. Once active therapy is completed you will be reevaluated on a six month or one year visit depending on your individual case.

Exercises

Very often patients find that they are unable to close their teeth completely in the morning immediately after removing the appliance. This is normal and is due to a temporary jaw joint change. This will generally resolve within 10 or 20 minutes on its own as the joint drifts back into its normal position.

After several minutes, jaw exercises are helpful to re-establish joint position and proper tooth contact. This can be accomplished by clenching the teeth together and holding for several seconds and then releasing and then repeating the clench/release for a minute or so. Then, you may clench/release on the soft plastic exercise tabs that were provided to you for a minimum of 5 minutes. This is important to retain muscle memory. Another method to reduce muscle soreness is to chew gum while taking a hot shower. Chew and shower for about 10 minutes or until teeth close properly and comfortably, additional massaging of the cheek muscles and warm moist compresses can help to reduce muscle soreness.

Recording Symptom Progress

Please use the note book provided to record changes in symptoms and any side-effects you encounter.

When to Call the Office

Please feel free to call the office anytime you have a concern that you feel needs personal attention by the doctor or the staff. Please let us know immediately if you have jaw pain, difficulty closing your teeth together or if you cannot wear your appliance for any reason. Oral appliances are only effective when worn so it's important that you wear your dental device every night.

Follow us and tell everyone how the Oral Appliance has helped you, a spouse, or significant other!

Also find helpful information on Oral Appliance Therapy and Sleep Apnea!