

## How can Advanced Dentistry Improve your Lifestyle? Part 5

TMJ is one of those buzz words that everyone seems to hear about these days. But what exactly is it? In reality, we all have (TMJ) Temporomandibular joints, but usually when a reference is made it refers to head or jaw pain in this area. There are many signs and symptoms that can fall under a “TMJ Disorder” that the majority of people and even physicians are unaware of. Many people give up hope because they are not finding the answers and solutions to these debilitating symptoms. They seek out help from their primary care physicians, ENTs, or oral surgeon, when dentists trained in advanced techniques are the proper providers who treat these debilitating symptoms. This month, I want to shed some light on this common syndrome that affects the quality of life of so many people.

### Some of the most common TMJ symptoms:

- Daily Headaches
- Migraines
- Jaw Pain
- Facial Pain
- Ear Pain or Ear congestion
- Ear ringing (Tinnitus)
- Dizziness (Vertigo)
- Neck Pain

For many people, dealing with headaches, facial pain and other TMJ symptoms becomes a normal part of life. Many people have been seen by numerous physicians throughout their lives without any improvement in these symptoms only to be given suggestions on ways to manage their pain rather than solutions to the actual problem. Physicians typically are not trained to treat a TMJ disorder. Commonly physicians will refer chronic pain patients to a dentist who is specially trained to treat problems dealing head and neck pain. In most cases a majority of these symptoms can be caused by having an unbalanced or improper bite.

### There are 3 components that affect your bite:

1. teeth
2. facial muscles
3. right and left jaw joints (TMJ)

When these three things are not in balance, a TMJ problem can occur. Approximately 90% of people in the world have poor bites; luckily most people can adapt throughout life with little or no discomfort. However, some people are not able to accommodate and are thrown into a pain spiral at some point in their life. If a person has had dental work, is a clencher or grinder, or has missing teeth, it can have a significant effect on the surrounding facial muscles and joints which can lead to discomfort and pain. This would be similar to having one leg 2 inches longer than the other leg. For years, things may feel fine but over time you would start to notice discomfort due to the imbalance. These symptoms could arise anywhere since the entire body

would be trying to accommodate the longer leg. Do you suffer from daily headaches? Have you been diagnosed with migraines?

Commonly people don't realize that these can be the result of a poor bite resulting in a TMJ disorder. The majority of headaches are considered “muscle tension headaches,” and can be directly related to a person's unbalanced bite. Many people diagnosed with migraines can actually be suffering from these muscle tension headaches. This syndrome is the source of chronic pain for many, and can result in severe wear, or fracturing, of your teeth and dental restorations, and maybe to tooth loss. This vicious cycle results in an even more unbalanced bite causing a person's headaches and pain to worsen over time.

### Common Signs in the mouth that can lead to TMJ problems:

- Tooth wear
- Tooth loss
- Teeth clenching
- Teeth grinding
- Tooth pain
- Tooth sensitivity
- Limited opening of the jaw
- Locking of the jaw
- Clicking or popping of the jaw joints

Depending on a dentist's training and experience in this area, they should be able to determine if a patient has a poor bite through an exam and precise measurements. Some dentists will treat the patient themselves, but most will



### Dentally Speaking

by Jeffrey S. Haddad D.D.S.

refer them to an advanced dental professional that focuses on TMJ treatment. Our office has extensive training in TMJ Disorders which addresses a person's unbalanced bite and reduce or relieve daily headaches, migraines, and other related

symptoms. We have been successfully treating TMJ patients for over 20 years in very predictable ways. With the use of specialized computer jaw tracking and muscle relaxation techniques we are able to identify which muscles are being affected and track their improvement. With the use of this sophisticated technology, advanced dentists can accurately identify who is a candidate for this approach. This makes people very comfortable with pursuing this treatment because they are confident they will benefit from it. Seeking TMJ treatment now will improve your outcome, decrease treatment time, and avoid the probable risk of symptoms increasing. What are you waiting for? Let advanced dentistry give you back the quality of life you deserve.

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