



## **Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction**

One cause of facial pain that can be misdiagnosed or confused with Trigeminal Neuralgia is a problem with the temporomandibular joint (TMJ). The temporomandibular joint is where the temporal bone of the skull connects to the lower jaw (*mandible*). When you bite and chew, these joints on either side of your jaw sustain an enormous amount of pressure.

Like all of your joints, your TMJ may develop osteoarthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and other inflammatory conditions. Most often, the cause of TMJ pain is a combination of muscle tension, anatomical problems, and injury. Discomfort and pain may be temporary or chronic and often goes away with little or no treatment.

### **Causes of Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction**

In order for you to open your mouth and operate your jaw in the way that it should, your left and right TMJs must work in unison. If the movement of both of these joints isn't coordinated, the disc that separates your lower jaw from your skull can slip out of position, and problems will result. Dislocation of your TMJ may take place if your mouth is forced to open rapidly or too widely.

In addition, muscle pain and tightness around the jaw can often come from muscle overuse as a result of clenching or grinding the teeth brought on by psychological stress or overuse. Extreme jaw clenching can also lead to pain over the temples. Excessive gum chewing or forceful biting, such as cracking nuts in your teeth, may also strain the TMJs and cause pain.

### **Symptoms of Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction**

- a clicking sound or grating sensation on opening the mouth or chewing
- dull aching pain in front of the ear
- headaches that don't respond to the usual medical treatment
- locking of the joint, making it difficult to open
- tenderness of the jaw muscles
- facial pain

The pain will often occur only on one side of the face, and sometimes the pain may seem to occur near the joint rather than in it.

### Diagnosing Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction

A dentist can usually diagnose TMJ through a combination of physical examination and x-rays.

### Treating and Preventing Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction

If the TMJ disorder is caused by inflammation within the joint, physical therapy and medications such as acetylsalicylic acid\* (ASA), other nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs), or muscle relaxants work quite well. If a person is experiencing severe pain and inflammation, the doctor or dentist may recommend that a corticosteroid or a local anesthetic medication be injected into the joint to reduce discomfort. Acupuncture, acupressure, massage, and hypnosis are other techniques used by some dentists to decrease pain and to relax muscles.

A soft diet may be recommended to reduce the strain on the TMJ caused by biting and chewing.

If you're aware that you clench or grind your teeth, you can take steps to break the habit. You may be given a night guard to wear. Splint therapy is the most popular and least invasive treatment. In addition, biofeedback or relaxation therapy, physical therapy, other behaviour modification techniques, and therapeutic jaw exercises can help.

If you have abnormalities in the alignment of your teeth that are causing TMJ problems, your dentist may correct this by balancing biting surfaces, replacing missing teeth, or replacing uneven or defective fillings or crowns.

Your dentist may also recommend changes in your chewing habits such as limiting gum chewing or avoiding firm foods such as caramels, non-tender meats, raw carrots, and celery. You may also be asked to try to limit opening your mouth wide when you yawn.

## Calgary Group

The Calgary groups meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month at 1 pm in the Confederation Park senior's Center. Contact Bev to confirm dates and location at [Calgary@catna.ca](mailto:Calgary@catna.ca).

## Regina Group

The next meeting in Regina is September 17. The meeting will be at the Wascana Rehabilitation Center at 10 am. Contact Faye for more information at [regina@catna.ca](mailto:regina@catna.ca).

### Group Summer Update - a message from Faye!

When we had the Hygienist speak and suggest some **Collis-Curve toothbrushes** that would help us brush our teeth when it is difficult caring for your teeth. One of our members works at Shoppers Drug Mart and asked them to make a special order. This is the only Shoppers that carry them in Regina: Shoppers Drug Mart, General Hospital, 1440 - 14th Ave. I picked one up and the price was \$7. I couldn't believe the price. STOP and think about it. If we don't take care of our teeth we could have a lot of problems later and it will cost a lot more than \$7.

I have booked rooms for upcoming meetings. There will be some changes in rooms for upcoming meetings but I will let you know closer to the dates.

### **Special Regina CaTNA Seminar**

**Dr. Anthony Kaufmann  
Neurosurgeon, University of Manitoba**

**October 29, 2011**

**Contact Faye for more information**

**Everyone is welcome to attend.**

**September 17, 2011** --- Sharing and a planning meeting

**October 29, 2011** - Dr. Anthony Kaufmann from Winnipeg will be the guest speaker. Circle your calendar. We are looking for people to help organize this event. Please step forward and give us a hand.

**November 26, 2011** - What would you like? If you have a suggestion please let me know.

Now that we have summer, don't forget the sun block. Enjoy and see you in September.

## Toronto Group

The Toronto Group meets the last Sunday of each month at 9:30 am in the Thornhill Community Center. The next meeting will be August 28<sup>th</sup>. Please contact either Kathy or Sandra to confirm meeting dates and times at [Toronto@catna.ca](mailto:Toronto@catna.ca)

### **CATNA (Toronto Chapter)**

We invite you, your family and friends to join us for an evening of good food, fun, laughter and conversation. Share your personal experience with others who also suffer with TN and sympathize with the pain you are living with. Gain valuable knowledge from our special guest:

**Dr. Anthony Kaufmann,  
Neurosurgeon, Health Science Centre  
Winnipeg, Manitoba**

***Saturday September 17, 2011***

### **Toronto Updates:**

The Toronto meeting for August 2011, 7755 Bayview is meeting room C as always. **CHANGING ROOM FOR SEPTEMBER 25th** meeting to the **fire side lounge**. Notices will be posted

### **Niagara Group**

Please contact Brenda for updates on meeting times and dates.

[Niagara@catna.ca](mailto:Niagara@catna.ca)

## CaTNA

*Don't forget – we would love to hear from you. Your story might provide inspiration and encouragement to someone else. You can send me an email, or a letter, or post your story on the CaTNA message board.*

*Hope everyone enjoys the remainder of the summer.*

*Jan*

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