

## *Support for your healing*

Early intervention that includes a complete dental examination will make it possible for your dentist and massage therapist to work together for the most professional, comprehensive treatment available.

Your massage therapist may employ a variety of massage techniques as well as ice massage and stretching. More important than specific techniques are the training and experience of your practitioner. Your therapist will be delighted to answer any questions about his or her background and approach.

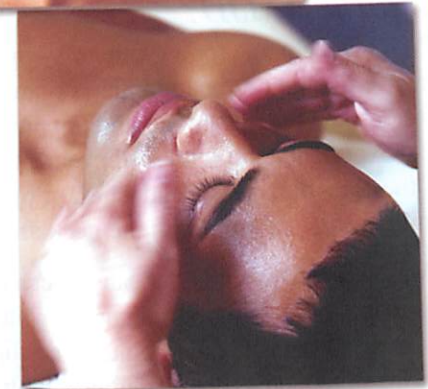
Your therapist or dentist may have recommendations for your home care. For example, they may recommend that you apply heat (or sometimes cold) to the jaw joint to ease symptoms, avoid chewing gum or crunchy foods, and eat a well-balanced, nutritious diet.

Your massage therapist may also teach you simple stretching, self-massage and relaxation techniques to reduce muscle tension, relieve stress, and improve postural habits. In addition, you may help improve your condition by decreasing your stress level with activities such as aerobic exercise, yoga, breathing exercises or stress counseling.

## *Effective complementary care*

If you have TMJD, therapeutic massage can be a powerful support to your dental treatment. It can relieve pain, increase ease of movement and reduce headaches. In combination with your own self-care measures, massage can help you feel better, manage your stress, and enjoy your life more fully.

# *Massage for TMJ Dysfunction*



*Complementary  
care for your  
tension and pain*

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Have you ever experienced pain while talking or chewing? A popping or clicking in your jaw? Do you have a history of grinding your teeth? These are a few of the signs of a condition affecting millions of people, known as Temporomandibular Joint Dysfunction (TMJD). If you have TMJD, you may find that in addition to dental attention, gentle, relaxing massage can offer tremendous relief.

### *What is TMJD?*

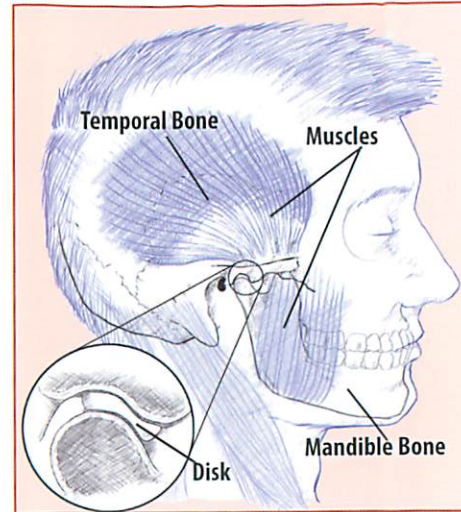
TMJD is the name for a group of symptoms that involve the temporomandibular, or jaw, joints. Besides jaw pain, grinding and popping, you may also experience limited jaw movement, ringing in the ears, dizziness, headaches, or pain and limited range of motion in the neck and shoulders.

TMJD can have a variety of causes such as traumatic injury to the jaw, an uneven bite, arthritis of the temporomandibular joint, or the slipping or tearing of the joint's disk. Traumatic injuries in the neck and shoulders, such as whiplash, can also bring on TMJD. Other causes include stress overload and postural problems.

### *A quick picture*

The drawing below shows the temporal and mandible bones, from which the temporomandibular joint gets its name. The joint is surrounded by ligaments and muscles which play a vital role in controlling the jaw's position and movements. A small cushioning pad known as the disk assures a smoothly functioning joint.

### *The Temporomandibular Joint*



*Massage can reduce symptoms by relieving tension in muscles around the jaw, neck and base of the skull.*

### *How does massage help?*

Researchers generally agree the most common element of TMJD is myofascial pain — discomfort in the muscles (myo) and their connective tissue coverings (fascia). Massage can relieve myofascial pain by releasing muscle tension and stretching contracted fascia of the muscles that control the jaw, neck and shoulders.

As tissues relax, circulation increases. This softens fascia, cleanses tissues of irritating by-products of inflammation, and improves nutrition to stressed areas. Pain is relieved, and headache strength and frequency are often reduced. Range of motion in the jaw, neck and shoulders improves, allowing a return to a more natural posture.

In some cases, dentists treat TMJD with an appliance to reposition the jaw. Massage can help relax the surrounding muscles so that a correct fitting can be made.

### *Stress, massage and TMJD*

Physical or mental stress can play a major part in TMJD by increasing muscle tension and heightening sensitivity to pain. Massage can help, first by relieving pain, a major stressor for TMJD sufferers. Second, research shows that massage calms the nervous system. This allows muscles to relax, slows and deepens the breath, and frees up energy for vital maintenance functions such as repair of injured tissue. Just knowing there is something you can do to reduce your symptoms, even temporarily, can relieve emotional stress by giving you some control over your situation.

